とある魔術の禁書目録（インデックス）11
鎌池和馬
イラスト／灰村キヨタカ
電撃文庫

Toaru Majutsu no Index - Volume 11

<< CONTENTS >>

- Illustrations
- Prologue: The trip of Northern Italy. Un_Viaggio_in_Italia.
- Chapter 1: The Streets of Chioggia. Il_Vento_di_Chioggia.
- Chapter 2: The Preparations for going to London. Un_Frammento_di_un_Piano.
- Chapter 3: Aboard the Capital of Water's vessel. Il_Mare_e_la_Sconfitta.
- Chapter 4: Fireships and a Battle of Gunfire. Lotte_di_Liberazione.
- Chapter 5: Queen of the Adriatic Sea. La_Regina_del_Mare_Adriático.
- Epilogue: Return to Academy City. L'inizio_Nuovo…….
- Afterword
- Credits

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Toaru Majutsu no Index 11

"Hmm. Based on the results of the 'Visitor Numbers Draw', your assigned number wins the top prize. It's impressive! The prize is a 'Pair Tour to Northern Italy for 5 Nights and 7 Days'. Congratulations!!"

On the final day of the Daihaseisai, the guy who could do nothing but boast about his "misfortune", Kamijou Touma, has somehow managed to draw the pair of overseas travel tickets.

Unexpectedly, in the midst of this good fortune, Kamijou and Index are at the climax of their tension. They were heading towards the floating scenery on the Adriatic Sea "Water Capital", the main island of Venice! In this longed-for Italian vacation, is there also a Dokidoki Love Event to benefit from!?

When Kamijou Touma and the goddess of luck cross paths, the story shall begin...!

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Kamachi Kazuma

In this issue, we have a story from abroad. I've been thinking, "Maybe, if I drastically change the relationship of how Kamijou usually teaches Index the ways of Academy City, it might be more interesting."But I hope you enjoy it the way it is right now.

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Toaru Majutsu no Index
Toaru Majutsu no Index 2
Toaru Majutsu no Index 3
Toaru Majutsu no Index 4
Toaru Majutsu no Index 5
Toaru Majutsu no Index 6
Toaru Majutsu no Index 7
Toaru Majutsu no Index 8
Toaru Majutsu no Index 9
Toaru Majutsu no Index 10
Toaru Majutsu no Index 11

Illustrator: Haimura Kiyotaka

Born in 1973. His cooking efficiency went up after buying a food processor.. But because he's so busy, he has no time to use it as often as he wants. Lately, the probability of eating in family restaurants went up instead.

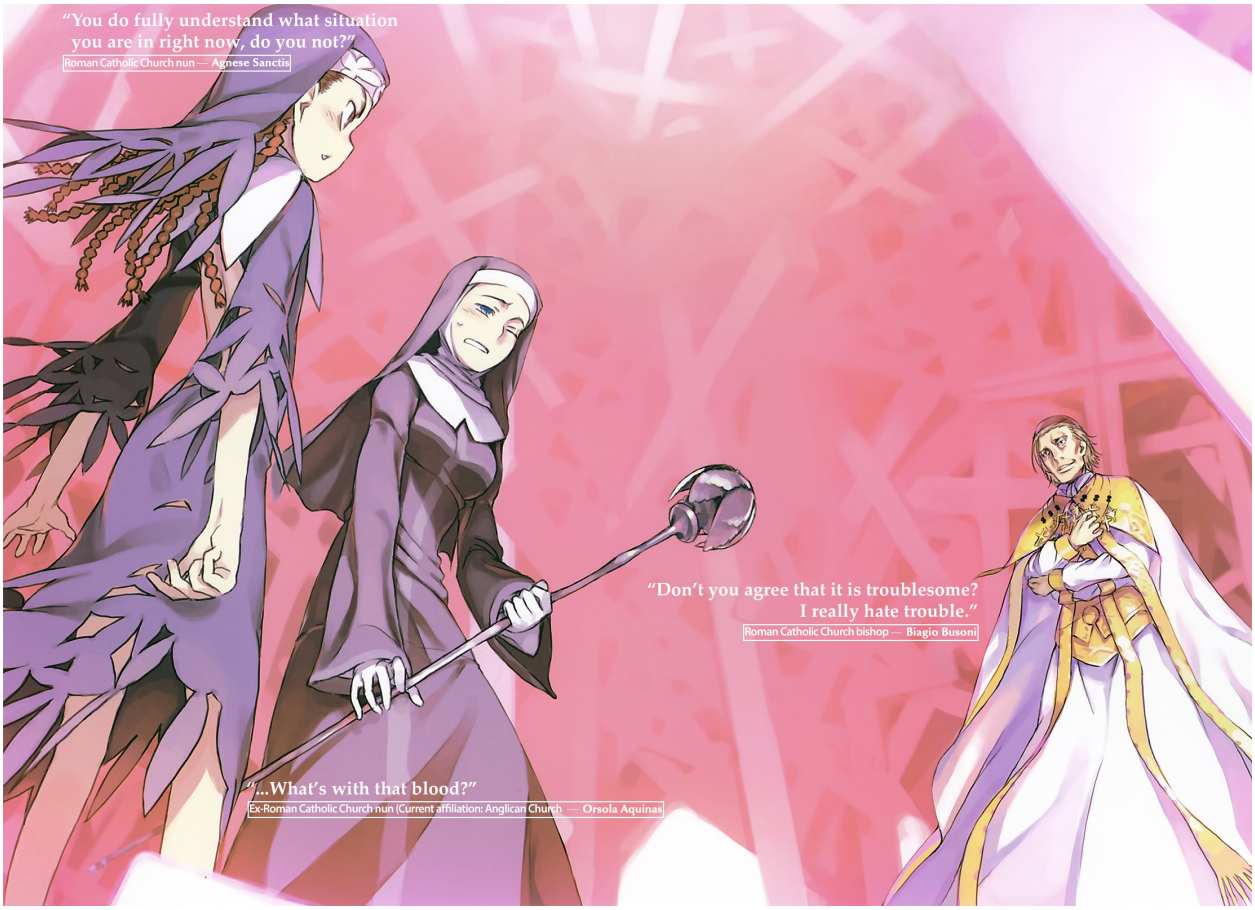
カバー／挿画扉

"Oh yeah, Index. After lunch...
NO WAY, DID SHE JUST
GET LOST IN ITALY!?"
High school student of Academy City— Kamijou Touma
とある魔術の
禁書目録
インデックス
11
鎌池和馬
イラスト／灰村キヨタカ

“Kyaaaa!? Something like ‘buo-n’ and sweltering wind came over to attack from that weird-shaped sti...ck!”
Anglican Church nun and keeper of the Index of Prohibited Books — Index

"...You came to help us out? I wonder if you think that we will believe words of that sort."
Roman Catholic Church nun and member of the Agnese Forces — Lucia
"..."
Roman Catholic Church nun and member of the Agnese Forces — Angelene

"S-say, where is this place...?"
"Well, looking only at the results, that's the lucky thing amongst all this misfortune."
Supreme Pontiff of the Amakusa Church — Tatemiya Saiji


"You do fully understand what situation you are in right now, do you not?"
Roman Catholic Church nun — Agnese Sanctis
"Don't you agree that it is troublesome? I really hate trouble."
Roman Catholic Church bishop — Biagio Busoni
"...What's with that blood?"
Ex-Roman Catholic Church nun (Current affiliation: Anglican Church — Orsola Aquinas

contents

10 Prologue The Trip to Northern Italy Un_Viaggio_in_Italia.

28 Chapter 1 The Streets of Chioggia Il_Vento_di_Chioggia.

62 Chapter 2 The Preparations for Going to London Un_Frammento_di_un_Piano.

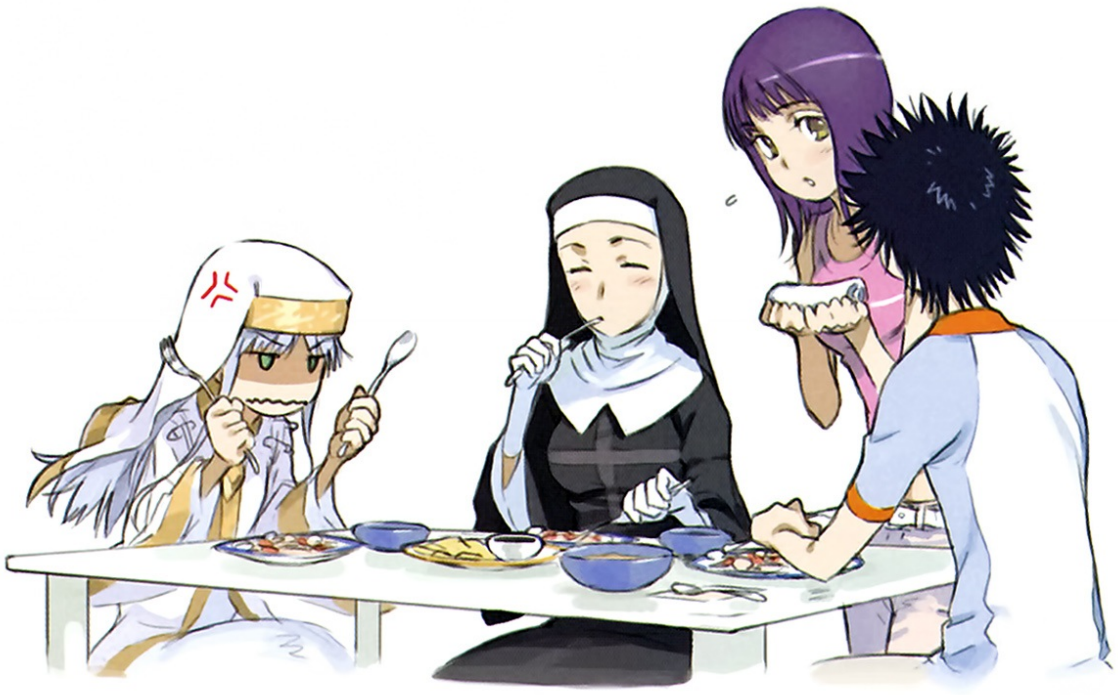
110 Chapter 3 Aboard the Capital of Water's Vessel Il_Mare_e_la_Sconfitta.

174 Chapter 4 Fireboats and a Battle of Gunfire Lotte_di_Liberazione.

248 Chapter 5 Queen of the Adriatic Sea La_Regina_del_Mare_Adriático.

338 Epilogue Return to Academy City L'inizio_Nuovo.....

Young girl of the Amakusa Catholics — **Itsuwa**



Prologue: The trip of Northern Italy.
Un_Viaggio_in_Italia.

Kamijou Touma was a man of misfortune.

One could tell just by looking back at the 7 days of Daihaseisai festival. The Daihaseisai festival should be something like an all-out sporting event, but for some reason, Kamijou Touma had gotten involved in a battle between magicians, one that involved the control over Academy City, and then all sorts of things happened.

Now, two days after that battle, the unfortunate situation still hadn't changed. Unintentionally, he had witnessed Komoe-sensei changing clothes again, was knocked hard by the Daihaseisai committee member Fukiyose Seiri, had got bitten by Index, was hit by Himegami Aisa's rubber ball as she was sitting on a wheelchair, and when he was pulled off by Misaka Mikoto to go for a folk dance, he was kicked in the back of the head by Shirai Kuroko who teleported behind him, and so on. Anyway, he felt that he was just getting into trouble all the time.

However, he was not the type to get discouraged no matter what misfortune came his way, so he might as well smile as he faced it. Besides, it was not like this 'misfortune', an especially unique feature of his, would change.

Repeated once again; Kamijou Touma was an unfortunate guy.

He missed out on extremely cheap sales at the supermarket by a few minutes, the manga that he bought from the convenience store had a few pages stuck together, he didn't win in any of the scratchcards, and the crystal display on the ice pops and fruit juice vending machine wouldn't even show.

Once again, Kamijou Touma was an unfortunate guy.

"Ah—the results of the customer number is out; your number got the top prize.

The prize is ‘a seven days, five nights, two people trip to northern Italy’. Congratulations!!”

What was that!? The shoulders of ordinary high school student Kamijou Touma dropped as he listened to that ringing voice, his black messy hair swaying around in the wind.

This was Academy City, located in West Tokyo; it was now the final day of the sporting festival—Daihaseisai. Kamijou was standing on a street that was linked to the major roads, and in front of him was a completely hand-made stall of plywood and nails. The stall attendant was a high school student from Kirigaoka Girls’ Academy, the ‘ojou’ academy. This was the ‘attendance’ venue set up by the student committee.

The method was simple.

One just needed to buy a card, write the estimated number of people that would be attending Daihaseisai and hand it over to them. Finally, the number closest to the actual target would get the largest prize, and so on and so forth.

Of course, there was a rough report ‘we’ve finally passed the ten million mark!’ on the television. Those who came later would have an easier chance of guessing it correctly, but for those people who guessed the same number, the earlier ones would get priority.

Wearing a short-sleeved sports shirt and red tights, the athletic female attendant pulled out something from under the counter —some weird envelope— with a crackling sound in the process, and said,

“This is meant for use during the block leave after the Daihaseisai festival, though it’s not meant for students.”

The girl gave a business like smile,

“All the related schedules in the trip, sightseeing reservations, and related books are inside here, so please read them later. If there are any problems, please don’t look for our school, but look for the travel agent over there. Alright? Next.”

While looking at this large envelope, Kamijou Touma felt that he might end up in a trap.

He folded his arms, tilted his head, and asked,

“Then, can I ask something?”

“I can’t answer anything related to the trip, but if it’s anything else, shoot.”

“First prize, it’s the first prize?”

“I don’t understand what you’re trying to ask.”

“This prize that the luckiest guy would get, right!?”

“Erm, can I go now?”

“No, wait, wait! This is a trip to northern Italy, right?”

“About that, it’s exactly whatever is written on it.”

“Will the plane fly towards some unknown science or religious organization's airport, or some weird exhibition?”

“…Oh, I got it. It’s your first time traveling overseas, no?”

Not only was that girl not stunned, she gave Kamijou a gentle look. Seemed like in the eyes of this Kirigaoka Girls’ Academy ojou, Kamijou was fearful and puzzled about going overseas to sight-see.

“Anyway, we gave out all the prizes, second and below, so if there’re any inquiries, please look for the travel agent.”

“AH! Wait, wait!! I understand, it’s impossible for something like this to happen!! Won’t there be any other things happening, though? Like the plane will get hijacked, and then find that I’m in Antarctica upon waking up! I got it, although I feel that this might be a trap, but this is really a trip to northern Italy, right!? OI!!”

To get the first prize or something, this was really weird.

So there must be a trap, Kamijou thought.

Therefore, he mustn’t go for this trip full of traps, Kamijou thought.

“That’s right, I don’t have a passport!”

Kamijou shouted as he was inside his room.

On hearing this, Index just stared blankly at Kamijou. This fourteen to fifteen-year-old girl with waist-length silver hair and green eyes had been under the sun throughout all of Daihaseisai, and now she had a bit of a heatstroke. However, there was not one bit wheat color on her skin, just a bit of red. On a side note, there were many safety pins on the gold embroidery on the white nun’s habit that looked like a Western teacup, which didn’t make it look decent at all.

“Touma, Touma. What’s a passport?”

The reason Index was using such a slow tone as compared to usual was because she was full. At the class victory party during the closing ceremony, Index, who was accepted by everyone in the class, had downed the food at an astonishing speed while others suspected her identity.

Kamijou pulled out all sorts of books and pamphlets as he stared at Index, saying,

“A passport is an item required to go overseas. I suppose it’ll take a month if I request one now, no?”

Come to think of it, how come Index didn’t know what a passport was when she had come all the way from England? Though Kamijou had this thought, Index was someone from the magic side who didn’t even know about the Japanese Constitution and International laws. Sitting on a flying carpet (Aladdin and the Magic Lamp…) at low altitude, radar probably wouldn’t even know how to detect it.

Was the air-defense of the country’s defenses alright? Kamijou wondered as he placed all sorts of information on the glass table.

On looking at it closely, it seemed to be some sort of group tour; all the travelers were to gather at the airport in northern Italy before going out. In other words, the schedule was preplanned.

The date of the gathering there was the 27th of September.

There were still two days.

After Daihaseisai, the workers had been in alert mode as they continued to remove the equipment, and during these days, the students got a break. Maybe it was because they tried to force the planning of the trip that resulted in this being so urgent — to ask for a passport in this situation, if something was to happen, he didn't know how to explain it.

"…Alright. Since this is like that, so it's really like that, huh? I won't feel depressed about it!! I knew that would happen right from the start, so I'm prepared!!"

Kamijou opened the envelope and lay on the floor, rolling out, obviously to shake away the feeling of regret. Kamijou's right foot hit the edge of the glass table, making him roll about in pain, shouting out like a fighter. The calico cat curled up nearby was shocked and jumped off the bed, grabbed the clothes hanging on the wall and leapt into the closet.

At this moment, the calico cat kicked a dusty tangled item out of the closet, which landed onto Kamijou's face that was facing up.

"WA! I'm being belittled by a cat!! Come to think of it, what's this?"

Kamijou used his right hand to pick the thing off his forehead tiredly. It was larger than a police identification card, a booklet made of red artificial leather. The words written on it were 'Japanese Passport'.

It was a passport.

Kamijou Touma suddenly stood up.

"Wh- WHY!? WHY'S MY PASSPORT HERE!!?"

Because he couldn't even pass his English class, Kamijou knew that he had no chemistry with foreign cultures.

Somewhat mindful of this, Kamijou quickly flipped through the contents. The stamps seemed to certify that Kamijou had been to Saipan and Guam before.

Had he gone overseas with his parents before?

“Anyway, I have a passport…so why doesn’t this feel good?”

Because Kamijou had lost his memories, he didn’t know the specifics of his past. Also, in order to hide this from everyone, he couldn’t discuss it with anyone. Kamijou glanced at Index, who didn’t seem to be mindful that Kamijou had found his passport. Besides, she probably didn’t even know what a passport was, so he couldn’t tell what her situation was now.

“Ah, Index, you don’t have a passport, do you?”

“Is the ‘passport’ you're talking about in your hand? Then I probably don’t have one.”

“In other words, we still can’t go for the trip because I can’t leave you unattended for three days.”

“Uuu, what are you implying? However, I don’t have it means I don’t have it.”

“…Come to think of it, Index. Why were you so calm about this? We’re going overseas!? Wouldn’t being excited be the normal reaction!!?”

“Touma, Touma.”

Now what are you saying? — Index was giving Kamijou this look.

“Wouldn’t Academy City be a foreign country to me?”

“Uuu!! I’VE BEEN REJECTED AS IF NOTHING HAS HAPPENED!!”

Kamijou looked startled as he stared at the white nun.

“…Eh? In other words, it’s like you’re living with me overseas?”

BAM!! Index slammed tiredly onto the floor.

She quickly looked up and said,

“Wh, wh, why, why, why are you suddenly saying such profound words, Touma!? I, I am a devout nun!! If I’m to get that kind of misunderstanding, it’ll

be disturbing for me even if I explain it!!”

“Ah, but.”

“An, anyway, I don’t have anything like that ‘passport’ in Touma’s hand! Though I do have something similar…”

“Something similar?”

“Mn, this.”

Said Index as she pulled out an English passport from the sleeve of her nun's habit. Kamijou felt that other countries only had some minor differences in terms of the pictures.

“An, anyway, you could have just ridden a plane as long as you’re with Necessarius. Good good, at least you didn’t ride on a camel and take the Silk Road here. This Kamijou won’t have to imagine all those weird ideas.”

“…I’m feeling that you’ve been treating me as an idiot all the way till now. But Touma, what’s the passport used for?”

“Oi, wait wait, Index. Let me look at your passport—what’s this!!? Why is your passport so new!? At least it should have a stamp that originates from England!!”

And the name given was ‘Index Librorum Prohibitorum’.

Such a terrifying religious country, Kamijou thought. In contrast, the girl just yawned in a bored manner, and said,

“Touma, Touma, this may be the effect of the automatic library.”

“You, to think that you would belittle this extremely rare Necessarius passport? You came here through the Silk Road, didn’t you!?”

“Touma, although you have been acting excited for no reason at all, the result is still that Touma and I can go for a holiday trip… so there’s no problem, right?”

Index asked in an unsettled tone.

…Eh? Kamijou’s eyes widened in surprise.

Now, it seemed that there was no problem.

He felt that he might as well go for this 7 day 5 nights northern Italy trip.

Kamijou Touma was supposed to be an unfortunate guy.

He should have had no chance of going for this.

And just like that, on the second day:

After Kamijou and Index had gotten nanodevices for traveling installed into their bodies, they arrived at the 23rd district of Academy City—a special school district meant for the development of aeronautical research. They were now at the international airport that had been built for the tourists from outside Academy City.

The waiting hall was maybe too spacious; the walls were all made of glass, and sunlight shimmered through them. Although the news was reporting that the halls were extremely busy, there were just a few people wanting to go home. The most likely thing was that they wanted to make full use of the time as they stay back at home. However, in this hall that was gradually becoming noisy, Kamijou was attracted to the noise made by the wheels of the luggage bag.

Kamijou was still wearing that half-sleeved shirt and pants, and his wallet was attached to his waist through a chain, and he had prepared some extra money by tying it on the inside of his thigh, so it was not hard to see that it was unsafe to go overseas. Also, the small chain told him where his wallet was, and it was not easy to break it. The money placed in the inside by his thighs was slightly high, hard to take out, and he wouldn’t be afraid of the money dropping as he walked. He was guarding his wallet to such an extent, but on the other hand, it would look like he was not used to traveling overseas if he was to put his wallet there anyhow.

On a side note, Kamijou was holding the luggage bag, whereas Index was empty handed. She didn’t have a lot of undergarments or pajamas, and besides the one set of white nun's habit, she didn’t have anything else, as she had put everything

into Kamijou's luggage bag. Also, before they left, Index had blushed as she pulled out a small rattan suitcase, saying 'This is also luggage'. When Kamijou had asked her what was inside, he had gotten bitten.

Speaking of luggage, the calico cat that she was often holding onto was at Komoe-sensei's apartment. Komoe had even said "Ka-Kamijou's going overseas? Is there really no problem? In, in a lot of context!! Sensei, won't be around, you know!?"

From the hall, Kamijou stared at the Immigration and Emigration Department inside.

"Eh?...I haven't forgotten anything, did I? Wallet, passports, tickets, tour guidebooks, clothes, dryer, handphone, got them, money for emergency purposes…mm, no problem, right? At least I don't have to shout 'such misfortune~' now."

"Touma, Touma, why were you so worried up till now?"

Index asked worriedly, but otherwise, she was feeling excited. On seeing her like this, Kamijou's worries disappeared.

"…Mm, yeah, I'm rather happy! I normally shout that I'm unlucky, and my thoughts have gotten weird; I should think that I'm lucky once in a while! It's hard to get such a vacation! Alright, a 7 day 5 night trip, I'm bursting with happiness!!"

Finally, Kamijou managed to get rid of his troubles and smile. Seeing him like this, Index also smiled.

"Just like that, Touma. Hm, if you are to use this attitude to interact, you'll know the meaning even if you don't know what they are saying."

"GAAAHHH!! FOREIGN LANGUAGES!? I FORGOT ABOUT THAT!!"

Receiving this sudden shock, Kamijou fell to the ground. He was in a situation where he had only gotten 22 marks in an English mini-test. Thinking of this, Kamijou stared gingerly at Index.

"That, Index."

“What, Touma?”

“Can you speak Italian?”

“I can, though it’s like Orsola’s accent. What now, Touma?”

“Italian, as in the Italian used in Italy?”

“Touma, what are you saying? If you’re uncomfortable with conversations, you can talk to me.”

“…Then teach me, starting from ‘yes’ and ‘no’ in Italian.”

“Touma, Touma. If I may ask, what can you do in Italy?”

Kamijou gave a ‘Of course I don’t know anything at all!!’ look at Index as he sprawled onto the floor. On seeing this, Index sighed.

“Touma, if you want to establish yourself in this international society, you have to know at least three languages.”

“AND NOW I’M TOLD OFF BY YOU, AN INEXPLICABLE NUN OF ALL PEOPLE!! ANYWAY, I SWEAR I’LL RELY ON YOU WHEN WE GET THERE!! I DON’T EVEN KNOW HOW TO SAY ‘YES’ AND ‘NO’ THERE!!”

“Never mind, there’s no need to explain it. But Touma, it’s best that you use this chance to learn how to interact…”

“This is only useful for those who are talented in languages. A hastily made gun like me can’t make it!!”

“You’re still struggling…”

“This is the first time I've met someone who looks so dazed yet can speak N number of languages! Come to think of it, since Index can speak Japanese so fluently, is Italian also like that…”

“Well, I have to memorise the 103,000 books all over the world, no? Italian is simple, the hard ones are languages without a system, like say, a song, which I have to distort the tones. There are many lyrics carved on stone, and I have to

learn them. However, these are only available for those island inhabitants or jungle inhabitants."

"…Anyway, I don't understand anything at all, so can I hand it over to you?"

"Mn, Touma has been fighting all this time. It's my turn now. There's no problem here, so Touma doesn't have to worry. Just go and play all you want."

This nun patting on her flat chest looked like Virgin Mary on Earth. Such a great help. Since Index had said this, there should be no problem, so he might as well go enjoy this trip to Northern Italy! Kamijou thought as he moved towards the Emigration area.

"I'll hand it over to you, Miss tour guide!!"

"Leave it to me, Touma. I'll talk with the shop attendants over there first."

"Miss tour guide, isn't that buying them over?"

"Normally, it's something like 'what the shop attendants and the customers need', there isn't too much of a difference. Even for someone who doesn't know how to live overseas—"

Wah!!

At this moment, the metal detector made a weird sound. Index was suddenly caught by burly guards from both sides,

Hm? Index revealed a weird expression.

She eyed Mr. Guard suspiciously.

"Ah…what the, why are there so many safety pins on you?" On one side, the guard who caught his suspect rubbed his temple, asking in a low voice.

"WAH! It's really a pile of weapons!! But if we take them off, the nun's habit will fall apart!!"

Before they left, it was better for Kamijou to handle the problems that Index created.

On the other side, Index was wondering why safety pins couldn't be brought though. She probably didn't know the significance of that weird sound from the checkpoint.

Must I feel unsafe when I'm following her? Kamijou wondered as the guard standing down there gave him a chilly feeling down the spine.

"I understand the hassle of this clothing! But now what? There're less than 30 minutes before the plane leaves…"

"Oh ya… there's some shopping area in the airport; let's buy some clothes."

"WHERE? WHERE!?" Kamijou popped his head out of the inspecting area, and suddenly saw a sign,

"Shopping area—1.5km from here."

"THAT'S TOO FAR!! The land for District 23 shouldn't be used anyhow! However, besides the plane, we can only ride the camels down the Silk Road!! Damn it, Index, we're going!! We can't board the plane if you can't get proper clothes!!"

"Ah, what, Touma… are we going to buy clothes?"

"Damn it, those sparkling eyes are making me angry! To waste money like this, SUCH MISFORTUNE!!"

Sighing, Kamijou grabbed the girl's hand and ran down the long corridor.

There were 28 minutes remaining before the plane left.

It was almost time for the plane engines to start.

Chapter 1: The Streets of Chioggia.
Il_Vento_di_Chioggia.

Part 1

The Marco Polo Airport in Northern Italy was often called the Gate of Venice.

The main purpose of the airport in Venice, which was floating on the Adriatic Sea and opposite of the Italian mainland, was to transport tourists. From there, the only way for people to take buses or trains was to walk across the 4km long Liberia (Note: this means ‘freedom’ in ancient Latin) Bridge to the Italian mainland, and then move through the remaining tourists that were being brought there through the sea routes.

Besides the main island Venezia,[1] the roads also lead to Vicenza, Padua, Bassano del Grappa,[2] Belluno and other cities. Anyway, all the tourists who were in Northern Italy for sight-seeing would land on this airport first; this included Kamijou and Index. Normally, this place couldn’t be reached directly from Japan, but Academy City was an exception.

After breaking through the interrogation of foreign security with some random and last minute Italian and sweating over the luggage that wouldn’t show up for a long while, they managed to get out of the airport successfully after everything was done.

On a side note, Index, who had bought some simple shirts and skirts at Academy City’s airport, was now changing out of them and back into the white nun's habit. Since she couldn’t bring the safety pins into the plane, she removed them, and after she reached the Marco Polo airport, she put them back on. To Kamijou, who was in Italy for the first time, for a girl’s first request be to wear those safety pins again, he was somewhat depressed.

On the bright side, come to think of it, the fact was that they had managed to land on foreign ground safely.

Now, they only needed to meet up with the tour group members and follow the tour guide. Here in Italy, they would definitely choose the main island: Venezia, rich in historical culture and full of places where they could sight-see. In fact, Kamijou was clear about this after reading the tour guidebook overnight.

Just Venezia alone, there's the Piazza San Marco, Palazzo Ducale, Campanile di San Marco, the Ponte dell'Accademia, the natural history museum, the maritime museum, the world's first Teatro La Fenice!! Then there are native workshops of glass handicrafts and the place where Galileo taught after leaving Venezia, these are all tourist attractions!! They practically introduce them all in the tourist information!! Wa~!! I'm, I'm so touched!![3]

Kamijou thought.

"Not here yet…Touma."

"Ah, come to think of it, the guide said that we can't gather alone…"

It had been over two hours.

There were a lot of places that they wanted to go see, but without the guide, the places they could go were limited. Maybe the guide had misread the time or something.

Right now, they were at the bus interchange in front of the airport. However, this was still of part of the airport. The ceiling and pillars were not illuminated by sunlight, but by ceiling lights. As the floor and the ceiling were flat and smooth, it didn't feel like it was outside. No matter what, the lighting resembled those of a multistory parking garage.

All the buses passing by were blue and orange in color, although of different models. *Maybe they have different destinations,* Kamijou observed.

Even so, they could act according to the time.

I can see now how Orsola could get lost even by taking a bus…

Kamijou remembered the smile of that former Roman Catholic nun, understanding the situation somewhat. On the other hand, Index still seemed to be affected by heatstroke, swaying about a bit.

The average latitude of Europe was close to Hokkaido. Because the humidity was lower here than it was in Japan, this was not comfortable at all…the tourist information noted that this was inevitable.

The airport faced the Adriatic Sea, and the warm wind of the tide mixed with the exhaust of buses to form a little cyclone. The temperature might be more comfortable if the body and face were warm like this. Time was passing by and the heart was becoming like a water-eroded rock. The Western European tourists and businessmen were also looking up at the sky, wiping the sweat off their faces.

“Touma, are we abandoned here?”

“Damn it, they should’ve been here by now...really, we can’t use the phone to contact them; we don’t even have an idea on what to do!”

As result of the hard work from telephone companies of Academy City, Kamijou could use his phone in Italy. However, the number that he asked for was prerecorded in Japanese, so he couldn’t call them.

The members weren’t gathered, and the guide couldn’t contact us, Kamijou thought. But he couldn’t just take the plane back like this; they had already booked their schedules and a hotel.

“There’s a familiar nun here, so there should be no problem. Anyway, we can’t just stand around here. And we can’t do anything by just standing around here. Let’s put our luggage in the hotel. We’re all staying at the same place. Maybe we might meet up with the tour guide.”

“Ah,uuuu…Touma, can we rest? I’m tired now, my legs are tired.”

“Don’t complain, I’m tired as well. Either way, let’s get to the hotel first. There’re beds and air-conditioning there, so we can rest before going out to sight-see.”

“Uuu…I can’t energise myself with that. Without that famous Italian ice cream, I won’t be able to revive. I have never eaten it before, but since it’s so famous, it must be good.”

“That kind of thing, huh? People would normally go for those famous things during a sightseeing tour, normally speaking.”

“Mn, on a side note, Venezia is famous for its Italian Squid Ink Gelato.”

“…Let me ask something: is it really that famous?”

On hearing this slightly delicate request, Kamijou went near the pillar to read the rectangular schedule board and check when the earliest bus was.

“— No point worrying about it, I might as well see it for myself…Index! Sorry, can you check and tell me which bus goes to the hotel?”

“Eh, mm, okay—”

Seeing Index walk towards the board, Kamijou sighed and thought that it was great that he was with her. To be honest, he could read a bit of English, but Italian was completely foreign to him. He wouldn’t know what to do if he was alone. Just as Kamijou was thanking this nun who was reading the board intently in his heart, she said,

“—but Touma, how do you read a bus schedule?”

“YAAAAAHHH!!! MY TUBE OF HAIR WAX BROKE!!!”

In the end, after chasing each other for quite a while, it took them 15 minutes to get onto the bus.

Part 2

The first target of the 7 day 5 night trip in Italy was the main island of Venezia.

However, Kamijou and company were staying at a hotel 20 km south of that (in fact, it was even further away because the coastline was curved) in a town called Chioggia.

The accommodation here wasn't cheap, and it seemed to lack a night life because all the shops in Venezia closed rather early. If they wanted to play for 24 hours, it was not rare for tourists to choose hotels that were farther away from Venezia, at least that was what was written in the guide booklet…but even as a highschool student, Kamijou didn't find it credible.

"But it's close to the sea."

Kamijou blurted as he disembarked from the bus. The hand carrying the luggage bag quickly felt the weight.

Though the airport was also near the sea, Chioggia got more of the sea breeze.

However, there was no beach. The coasts were made of stone canals, letting the rivers flow into the sea like a saw cutting the land.

And Index, who was standing beside him, said,

"I think it's more like we're surrounded by the sea than being near it."

"What's going on?"

Kamijou paused among the crowd, looking for Index. As he was holding the luggage, he looked like someone who was here for business or to tour about.

"We're in the middle of Chioggia right now, an island on the Adriatic Sea that's separated by 3 rivers. This is a small town that's 400m in length. The land wouldn't increase no matter what, so the buildings are packed together. When you see it, you can see why the gaps between the houses are so small."

Really? Kamijou wondered as he looked around.

The said canal was in front of him. The turquoise waters separated the town like lines. It was about 20 to 30 meters wide, and there were flat roads on both sides, and suddenly blocked in front by a house. The rice-white surface of the wall looked like the first layer of a dike. The space between every house was so small that not even a soccer ball could pass through it. *How do they clean that area?* Kamijou wondered.

Suddenly, a motorboat sailed past Kamijou's eyes.

There were many ports along the canal, occupying half of the area of it. This meant that it was a necessary quantity, a basic way of transport that linked all the way to the sea. The ports looked like they were used for entertainment; each one of them had an antique feel. Looking closely, cloth rags and pails were just randomly placed there.

Kamijou, who was not used to seeing these, felt that they were very troublesome, and said,

“That is rather troublesome, isn’t it?”

Index looked surprised as she replied,

“As this place is separated by so many canals, the bridges have to be winding. You can’t go down the canal if you don’t use a boat. Although, to be honest, the best way of transport is still by land.”

She bitterly laughed,

“This place is like Venezia. Before Chioggia became a tourist destination in the 16th century, it was supposed to be a town that’s meant to preserve the original street environment of Venezia. In other words, including the weaknesses.”

“…”

After hearing such words flow so fluidly, Kamijou pondered silently.

He stared at Index.

“What now, Touma?”

“Index…Index is someone who knows about things other than magic, huh…”

“Touma’s saying that I’m stupid, right!!? Why do you feel that way even when I told you so nicely!!? If Touma feels that way, I’m going to bite you to death—no mercy!!”

“Don’t bite me!! Anyway, you shouldn’t say that you won’t forgive someone in this situation—sigh, never mind—sigh, never mind, it hurts before you even tried!!”

Facing Index, who was baring her teeth, Kamijou backed away without a second thought. Even if he used the luggage bag as a shield, this level of defense would easily be bitten through. Kamijou slightly felt the danger to him.

But in contrast to the trembling Kamijou's prediction, Index didn't rush forward, but dropped her shoulders down and sighed.

"Never mind, we came here happily to go on a tour, no point in getting angry over such a thing. Come on, Touma, put down the luggage bag."

"…To counter with words and win without a battle, won't you attack me when I let my guard down?"

"No."

"Will you attack me once I'm relaxed?"

"No, no."

"Last time…really?"

"No."

"NO WAY! YOU'RE DEFINITELY ANGRY! EVEN FOR GIRLS, WHO MATURE FASTER THAN BOYS, THIS SORT OF ACTING WON'T FOOL THIS KAMIJOU!! HAHAHA, HOW CAN I EXPECT THAT WHEN I'M ALWAYS UNFORTUNATE! YOU'LL DEFINITELY BITE ME IN THE END! GOT TO GUARD MYSELF TIGHT, THE VICIOUS NUN INDEX IS EYEING MY HEAD, WANTING TO BITE ME!"

"…"

"AREN'T YOU ANGRY NOW? YOUR PITIFUL ACTING IS CRACKING… EH? YOU'RE REALLY ANGRY? YA! THE GENTLE NUN IS SILENTLY OPENING HER MOUTH!? DAMN IT, THIS IS THE CASE! ISN'T THIS WHAT I EXPECTED!? THOUGH I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT THIS AT ALL WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH—!!"

The sound of flesh being bitten could be heard.

At the same time, the boy who often angered Index let out a dying cry.

Part 3

Upon reaching northern Italy, the first thing that was requested from Kamijou was the safety pins.

Upon reaching Chioggia, the first memory Kamijou made was being bitten.

“…I can’t explain this. What’s going on?”

“Touma, what’s with you saying this with blood and tears?”

A completely innocent-looking Index looked completely relaxed now.

This was just the road heading towards the hotel. Having moved through it once, one could understand that this place was extremely narrow, such that only 2 people could pass through it. Vehicles couldn’t move through freely, thus they were unable to move into the alley and would have to wait at the square.

Kamijou and Index were now heading towards the road. Though there were three lanes, there wasn’t a white line on either sides of the road, and there were no lines to distinguish which were roads and which were trails. There were a lot of people walking on the roads, so this place looked somewhat like a haven for jaywalkers. Of course, they normally saw Asians in Academy City, and a lot of Westerns on television.

Light red and yellow buildings were arranged on both sides of the road. Those from 3 stories to 5 stories tall seemed to be cafés or hotels. A tent-like awning extended out from the second level to cover the open-air area of the coffee shop, making the road look like a tunnel.

They were at a corner of a café.

The reason why Index was happy was basically because there was a lot of good

food around. Seeing that there was no other reason, Kamijou sighed.

“Let’s put our stuff in the hotel before we go out to eat.”

“Uu, I know that without you telling me!!”

Index blushed as she frantically shouted, but Kamijou didn’t know whether she really knew or not. She was still looking at the café, for one thing.

“Ha, though the food looks nice, the main thing we came for are the tourist attractions. For example, that temple! Though I don’t know how it originated, it does look cool!”

“Touma, that’s the St Mark’s Basilica, it’s a magical core built out of water that’s meant to preserve the remains of the protector of Venezia—St Mark.”

“Forget about those boring explanations; wouldn’t it be better for us to go there?”

“Uu! Touma’s ignoring my kind explanation?”

“After we check in at the hotel, we’ll catch that stupid tour guide and go to Venezia! VENEZIA BANZAI!!”

“Listen, Touma! I’m not always thinking about food!!...Wa, there’s no hope now; Touma’s now completely consumed by the Italian atmosphere and can’t hear anyone!?”

Though Index was saying this as she waved her hands, Kamijou didn’t notice her at all. This battle nun had never thought that once someone mentioned "Italy" to a Japanese high school student, they’d only talk about pizza and soccer, and would become so excited upon entering to the streets that they would only see in television.

“Quanto costa?” (How much is it?)

“Posso fare lo sconto del 10%.” (I can do a discount of 10%.)

All this Italian, which seemed foreign to Kamijou, echoed around. The tourist atmosphere was abundant here.

“Desidera?” (Do you want it?)

“Wa! Is that the local squid ink salad…?”

“Sto solo guardando. Grazie” (I’m just looking, thanks.)

Eh? Isn’t that mixed with some Japanese? Kamijou thought, but dismissed it as him hearing it wrongly.

Kamijou, who was in front dragging the luggage bag, said,

“Oh ya, Index. What about lunch…”

He paused halfway.

Kamijou Touma remembered the ‘final words’ that he said just now.

The reason was simple.

Index, who had still been there three seconds ago, had disappeared.

“NO WAY, DID SHE JUST GET LOST IN ITALY!!? SO THAT PERSON WHO SAID THAT SHE MISHEARD THAT SALAD WAS INDEX!!”

Shocked, Kamijou looked around, but was unable to find that girl in a nun's habit.

“Damn it! It’s the crowd and the alleys' fault that I can’t find that gluttonous nun! Damn it, you’re only thinking about food alright!!”

No one replied to Kamijou’s sighs, and there was no sign of Index around. The wallet was still with Kamijou, so she couldn’t possibly have gone too far. Even if he didn’t chase after her, she would come back, but…if Kamijou didn’t stop her, who knew what kind of trouble she would stir up.

“OI~INDEX!”

Kamijou started to look around, from the roads, and in tenterhooks, back into the alleys. Looking around, he didn’t even know where he was now. He panicked as he walked into the alleys, and ended up going back onto the road.

“Wa, I seem to be the one lost!!”

Kamijou broke out in cold sweat as he stood there.

Looks like I have to rely on the handphone!

But,

Obviously, Index’s free phone was turned off (very likely, Kamijou had helped her turn it off before they got on the plane and had forgotten to turn it back on). Hearing the conventional synthetic voice (In Japanese, not Italian), Kamijou hung up the phone and dropped it into the luggage bag, completely forgetting to put it into his pocket.

Right now, Kamijou was thinking,

WHAT DO I DO NOOOOWWWWWWWWW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

This voice made everyone who was walking around look at him, but nobody had the time to wonder what Kamijou’s problem was. At this moment, a local aunty moved towards Kamijou, who looked like he was bogged down by the luggage bag.

A hearty smile appeared on her face that looked like she was energetic enough to do manual labor,

“Ci sono delle preoccupazioni?” (Note: What’s the problem?)

“Ha?”

Kamijou didn’t know that she was inquiring what the problem was. On the other hand, the aunty wasn’t angry, slowly saying word by word,

“Non puoi parlare l'italiano? Là c'è un ristorante dove un giapponese fa il capo.”

You don’t know Italian? There’s a Japanese restaurant down the road. The aunty was saying this, but Kamijou was still unable to understand. However, there was a friendly feeling in the tone and expression.

(Though I don’t know Italian, I’ll really be alone if I miss this opportunity!

Alright, let’s try speaking in Japanese…may be impossible, but at least let’s try English. But I don’t even know how to say ‘please English’! I wouldn’t be worrying about this Italian if I knew that!)

Kamijou was troubled. If it was in English, he might be able to say ‘please English’, but being unaccustomed to foreign languages, Kamijou was unable to catch up. His head was finally starting to heat up.

“Senta.” (Listen to me)

He heard a woman’s voice.

“Lui è un mio amico. La ringrazia per la Sua gentilezza.” (He's my friend. He's thanking you for your kindness.)

On hearing such fluent words, the aunty looked surprised, and said.

“Prego.” (No problem, this aunty is mistaken.)

After ending with a happy tone, the aunty left Kamijou and disappeared into the crowd.

On the other hand, Kamijou didn’t know what was going on as he was abandoned there.

“Ah! I rejected the aunty unknowingly? Damn it, I thought that I could make friends with that aunty and use two hours of work to go find Index, and make this kind of story! Come to think of it, who’s the one who left me here? Damn it, I’ll just use Japanese, even if I can’t say it, at least I can express it!”

He said out loud.

In this wide world, nobody could hear it even if he shouted. Kamijou’s reasoning was almost killed off entirely, but,

“Oh my, that’s disrespectful. I’ll be troubled if you say that.”

He finally heard this language that he was so familiar with.

Besides the language, the lady’s voice was also familiar.

“You…”

Kamijou turned around.

At Chioggia, which had an eight hour time difference, the person he met here was…

“On a side note, I just said ‘He’s my friend; thank you for your kindness,’ though saying it so kindly…I’m not so familiar with you to call you a friend.”

“Orsola! Why are you here!?”

Kamijou shouted. The nun wearing a black nun's habit smiled.

Part 4

Orsola Aquinas.

A nun who was formerly a member of the Roman Catholic Church, but had converted to the Anglican Church. The reason was because she decoded The Book of the Law. Since that was settled, she should be in London.

Like the last time he met the nun, she was covered with a nun's habit; her entire body was covered except for her face. She had white gloves on her hands, and her hair was covered by a nun's headpiece. In contrast to the lack of exposed skin, the voluptuous body of this nun caused the simple nun's habit to emphasize the curves of her body.

She said,

“I should be the one asking you. Why are you here? Shouldn’t you be in Academy City?”

“I came here for a tour. You?”

“I was here since a few days ago.”

“Wait, Orsola, you should be in London, right? You were giving advice in the English Library during Daihaseisai.”

“Yes. The conversion from the Roman Catholic Church to the Anglican Church was rushed; my luggage was still left here. Also, I have to come back to send my valuables over to London.”

“This is your hometown?”

Facing Kamijou’s question, Orsola simply replied, ‘Nn’. Though this was a colorless exchange, to be able to converse so freely, Kamijou was honestly about to cry. *Anyway, even if it’s a coincidence, you’ve helped me a lot!* Kamijou thought.

“Oh, come to think about it, you’re still wearing this robe after converting to the Anglican Church? Wouldn’t the guys at Necessarius be angry?”

“Ha, but the people from the Amakusa said that they will help me move my stuff, and so they came along.”

“Wa!? Not again, you’re back to the previous topic!? But those Amakusa, don’t they belong to that Tatemiya? How is he?”

“There’s no problem with the clothing. The Anglicans are very enthusiastic and accepting to all sorts of magic spells and cultures. Right now, I’m a Roman Catholic of the Anglicans. The remaining Amakusas are also the same.”

“Now it’s the nun's habit!! Not only did you ignore it, you even touched on the Amakusa! It’s hard to understand!”

This form of talking wasn’t very suitable. Besides, she was speaking how her brain processed her thoughts. However, it was hard for the person listening to understand.

On the other hand, she didn’t notice it at all, even tilting her head in a cutesy manner.

“Come to think of it, are you here to buy something?”

“Nope…I’m here with Index. However, she’s drowning in the dream of Italian

salad, and has disappeared! What do I do now, Orsola? How about I tie a rope to a cake to incite her to come back!? The success rate is half-open!”

“Ma ma. Calm down. It’s rare for you to come out and tour about with Index, no? Especially since you’re not working on Academy City’s orders.”

“We’re back to this again!! ...No? There’s no job. Besides, being on the other side of the world, it’s too far.”

“Anyway, there’s still some time left, right? To meet each other here, what a coincidence. Actually, there aren’t enough people to carry the luggage, so since you’re free, please help out till dinner time.”

“NO!! To give up this holiday that I meant to use as a breather!? Anyway, we’re going someplace to sightsee, at least it’s not as troublesome as having to cook my own meals.”

Though it was an ordinary reply, Orsola still looked surprised as she examined Kamijou. She noticed the chain of the wallet and the luggage bag in his hand.

“Oh my, may I ask, is that attire appropriate?”

“I DON’T WANT TO BE LECTURED BY YOU IN TERMS OF ATTIRE!!!”

The heat from the end of summer hadn’t subsided, and Kamijou was roaring at this nun for wearing a completely black nun's habit in the season when it was more appropriate to wear short-sleeved or maybe shorter than long-sleeved clothes.

But Orsola looked uninterested, saying,

“Compared to Japan, there are many more nuns here.”

“Eh, Orsola’s replying normally?”

“Compared to that.”

No matter how surprised Kamijou was, Orsola pointed at the items that Kamijou had, and said,

“Dragging a brand new luggage bag around, holding a tour guidebook and a handphone with camera functions…ha, soon there will be conmen saying ‘welcome, do you want a wallet or a passport?’ or something like that.”

“Uuuu!?”

Kamijou frantically hid the cell phone and notebook.

“But, but for Orsola to say this, I’m somewhat surprised.”

Orsola just blankly sighed.

“This is just a small city, so there won’t be anything major happening. To all the tourists around the world, the Italian city environment is very tough. Even on the tourist streets, the restaurants extort the tourists. The menus are 10 times the normal prices. No matter whether they’re on the roadside or if they’re billboards in Japanese, this level of information isn’t so different, you’ll be making a huge loss…get it?”

“Wa! That’s a wake-up call!! What do I do?”

“So, the conclusion is that you should have your meal with me so you won’t be slaughtered badly by those kinds of shops. I’ll tell you what to take note of. Come on, there’s no point in standing around here. You need a place to meet up with Miss Index, right? Even though I say this, Chioggia’s central is 1.3km by 400m long; there’s no problem even if you don’t think of a plan.”

To say such words unambiguously, Kamijou was touched. *Of course, one should ask an Italian about stuff in Italy.* Being educated on the basics of the basics, Kamijou suddenly thought of this.

“But in the end, I still want to sightsee…”

“No, that ice-cream shop was able to make Miss Index very happy.”

……Huh?

“Wait wait, Orsola, what are we talking about now?”

“Right, about sightseeing, it’s good to tour through Chioggia’s settlements. It’s

nice to spend money to see those sights, but the natural living environment of the residents isn't something one can see by going with a tour guide."

"Wait wait, rewind! Rewind! Although those suggestions are rather logical, I have to find Index first…!"

"That's enough. I know it without having to confirm it. This lucky man."

"WA!? ARE WE GOING FORWARD OR BACKWARDS?"

Kamijou shouted, but Orsola smiled vaguely.

"If it's Miss Index, I just saw her at the window of the ice-cream shop."

"I WOULD HAVE LIKED IT IF YOU HAD SAID THAT RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING!...If so, where's Index?"

"Thus, the way to read the bus stop sign is—"

"Basically, where is Index!!?"

"Oh yes, oh yes, I let my friend bring her back to my house."

"THAT IDIOT LEFT ME BEHIND!!??"

"I just saw her say 'let's go for lunch' as she followed along happily."

"DDDDDDAAAAAAAAAAAAMMMMMNNNNNNNNNNN
IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIITTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT!!!!!!!!!!!!"

'Leave Italy to me,' which nun said that? Kamijou was grumbling inside, his body all frozen up.

"Ugh, uu…Orsola, what should I do? Though I have been bitten by her—IT'LL BE MY TURN. JUST YOU WAIT, INDEX!!!"

Seeing the cross-popping veins on the hand that was holding the luggage bag handle, Orsola just blankly smiled.

"Be careful not to get counter-killed when you take revenge."

“UUU!!?”

Just like that, Kamijou was defeated.

Orsola smiled happily.

“Anyway, the fastest way to meet up with Miss Index is to come to my house. Enough talk, the conclusion is to come over to my house.”

Come to think of it, going to Orsola’s place was the fastest method. It was much better than rejecting her and being alone.

“…Looks like I got into something unfortunate again.”

“Don’t mind it, don’t mind it. There would be plenty of accidents when you’re going overseas.”

Orsola said these words that seemed to be life lessons or something. Kamijou nodded his head.

Thinking about it in another way, the reason why travelling was so fun was because there were all sorts of things happening.

Speaking of travelling, as Kamijou had lost his memory, he had no memory of leaving Academy City on vacation.

Between the lines 1

Two horse carriages were parked on the road.

Though this was so, the ones pulling carriages were donkeys—in the past, they were pitiful animals which only fools would ride on.

The carriage was red in color, with gold decorations on it.

Not only was there a license plate, but a lot of effort had been put into the

measurements and specific adjustments. If used for touring, this carriage wasn’t so strange. Like those Venezia tour boats, as long as the customers needed it, any carriage, no matter how old, could be used.

But,

The carriage was in a different position from a normal carriage — it was horizontally placed. It looked like it had skidded, but that was not the case. The front right wheel of the four-wheel carriage was shocked loose, very unnaturally, like it was separated for some sort of reason.

At this moment, a hitting sound could be heard.

With the anguished cry of a male, an explosion could be heard as if trying to cut the cry off.

“Coo…to make a dying sound, such an atrocious sound.”

Saying this, a tall nun walked out of the shadows of the carriage. It was the nun, Lucia. Like St. Catherine of Alexandria, she wielded a large carriage wheel as her weapon. Compared to the gentle impression of a female, her dyed red hand would make anyone tense.

It was blood.

Lucia’s nun's habit was basic black robes with zips on the sleeves and skirt to make it easy to wear. Attached to the robes were yellow sleeves and a skirt. Yellow wasn’t a recognized color for a nun’s habit; it was a spiritual item that used the ‘forbidden color’ to turn a nun's habit into a seal.

The ‘**Forbidden-Colored Wedge**’ used the caster’s life-force and converted it into magic power. It was not something that one could easily obtain. The spiritual item itself didn’t have the effect of ‘clothing illumination’ (using that powerful effect would make it more dangerous); using the magical power on useless tasks would end up with the caster unable to use magic no matter how much the person trained.

But right now, she needed to dye the ‘Forbidden-Colored Wedge’ to seal off some of the magical properties. Of course, only her blood was effective.

“Sister Angelene, is everything ready there!?”

“Seems, seems like it’s done…”

After hearing the petite girl’s reply, Lucia looked inside the carriage. From the exterior, one wouldn’t imagine that the inside was slightly stained—in that carriage where the ceiling and walls were dark, the petite nun’s voice could be heard, seemingly struggling as she continued to work.

Compared to Lucia, who was wearing short sleeves, Angelene’s sleeves were so long that one couldn’t even see her fingers. “Can she really work like that?” Lucia muttered.

“…Ready! I’m now going to release the spell and retrieve the contents!”

With a soft voice.

The girl called Angelene took a metal box out of the carriage which it was fitted onto. The inside contained a magical weapon that was used to deal with traitors. Normally, people other than the designated personnel couldn’t use it. To seal it up like this, Angelene forcefully removed the seal.

Lucia nodded her head.

Not far away from the carriage was a tourist street, from where noise echoed over in full force. The sound in this ruckus was rather distinct, making a ‘th’ sound that wasn’t present in Italian, instead of using the ‘gli’ and ‘sci’ sounds, and also reading ‘s’ and ‘z’.

“This kind of reading…it sure feels like Laguna Gamagori style…but there are some differences from the original.”

Angelene muttered as she carried the thin and long metal box.

“If so, this means, that we’re going to be brought back to the ‘**Queen**’, right, Sister Lucia? The ‘Queen’…why must this be exaggerated…”

“We came out here to investigate it, Sister Angelene. I’m worried about Sister Agnese’s condition. I can’t relax with that seal alone. Let’s prepare to hide that tracking spiritual item first.”

Angelene nodded her head in agreement.

The petite nun confirmed everything before getting off the carriage, and Lucia grabbed the wheel that fell off with both hands. Her weapon was based on the ‘Wheel legend’ of St Catherine, using a wheel that exploded and regenerated.

The two nuns took up their own weapons and silently left the street. In contrast to their black nun's habits, the yellow sleeves and skirt danced in the wind abnormally, attracting attention like the warning color of a hornet’s abdomen, but they ignored this handicap as they moved into the scenery.

I will not agree to it.

As she walked, Lucia thought.

Sister Agnese is the nun that will cause my back to shiver out of respect. God is judging her like a sinner, the Church is discarding her like a tool or something… because I believe in the Roman Catholic Church, I will not agree to the method that’s like abandoning someone.

Lifting up her eyes that had been fixated on the ground, she looked forward as she quickened her pace. She was holding onto this unreliable weapon.

They had made their stand.

But because of that, and because they had focused too much on their own conscience, they were too slow to react to the outside world.

With a huge sound,

“BOOM”…!!?

Like being hit in the chest, the air in Lucia’s lungs was forced out. Her leg that was extended out instantly lost strength, and the fingers on her hands which were holding the carriage wheel became numb. Her only weapon, the wheel, rolled out and slammed hard onto the floor.

This pressure…which spiritual item is causing it!?

Lucia just thought of this, unable to take in enough air to say this in time.

Her body was pressed hard onto the dusty stone floor, and she didn’t even have anything to support herself. Her soft face was hurting from the sand grains pressing against her face. Looking sideways, Angelene, who was hit by the same attack, instantly lost her consciousness. She lost consciousness due to the initial hit, not by lack of oxygen.

Within her blurry vision, something was shining.

Turning her head around, Lucia saw a red light inside the carriage.

To move the carriage and the ‘Forbidden-Colored Wedge’ together…is it to prevent us from escaping? Maybe it’s when we move a certain distance away from the carriage, or when the carriage loses its mobility, or maybe after a certain amount of time or something…

Thinking about this, she exhaled a huge amount of air.

…To think that it’s over at this point.

In this slanted vision, she saw a new carriage coming over. For that spiritual item to have such an effect, they were a bit too hasty. Maybe before the driver and the guards of the carriage were defeated, they had contacted the others through an emergency method.

Her fingers couldn’t even react.

She couldn’t even use any spells that only required the use of her head.

Though her hand could almost reach the wheel and use it as a weapon, Lucia, who had lost the preemptive chance, was about to lose consciousness.

Only a person’s name appeared in her mind.

Sister Agnese…

And then, she lost consciousness.

She was lifted up by the back of the collar of her nun's habit and was tossed inside the carriage like a rag sack.

Chapter 2: The Preparations for going to London.
Un_Frammento_di_un_Piano.

Part 1

Orsola’s house was on a lane from a turn off the road. There was a river nearby, and the smell of the sea could be sensed. There was a person standing on the stone road.

She was standing in front of a five story rectangular apartment. However, this wasn’t a modern apartment; there was no auto lock or other kind of functions. The tea color of the walls seemed to indicate that this was some sort of historical building. The antenna on the rooftop was rather subtle.

“All the buildings here give this sort of feeling. It sure is old.”

“They’re not just old, they’re very old. I do find the glittering buildings of Japan to be rather suppressing. The tall buildings that were too old were torn down 20 years ago — the progress of that country has proceeded really fast.”

“Were Orsola’s ancestors living here since a long time ago?”

“No, I was just sent here, so I rented a room.”

“So isn’t this just like my dormitory? Then what’s that green and yellow, fancy building behind it?”

“This place is a coastal city, so this building was made like this for sailors to be able to see their house from afar. However, since this building is not facing the sea anymore, there’s no need for it.”

It was not a major port for boats to gather, but rather, a required guide for locals

who were sailing to find their homes. Seemed that way.

Hearing Orsola's introduction, Kamijou walked into the apartment. Though her room was on the fourth level, logically, there was no elevator. Kamijou carried the heavy luggage bag up the metal staircase painfully.

"All right, are we there yet?"

Kamijou asked and looked past Orsola. Orsola was standing in front of a door in the corridor full of doors. Though it was an old wooden door, the new lock glittered unnaturally.

Orsola reached inside the sleeve of her nun's habit and, with a 'clang' sound, pulled out a key.

But before she could open the door, the door opened.

From inside, 4 Asians… Japanese youths, walked out.

Their clothing looked similar, but the color combination and the way they wore their clothes looked somewhat different. However, compared to Kamijou, with his wallet chain attached from the belt to the pocket, and a backup wallet tied behind his thigh, their attire was rather similar to those of the locals. Orsola herself had been asked to go out and shop, and so she smiled and handed out a large amount of French bread and paper bags to them.

Kamijou suddenly remembered and hurriedly moved inside the room,

"Ah! It's Touma, Touma~!"

He could immediately hear the familiar girl's voice inside the room, and also the footsteps like Daihaseisai, in contrast to how the room looked.

Moving from the side of youths, Index came running out of the room.

She was holding a box of ice cream. Well, holding, yes, but the box was about the size of 4 to 5 manga volumes.

Index was using a cylindrical ice-cream scoop as a spoon, tucking in big mouthfuls of the vanilla ice cream.

“Touma, the ice cream here is delicious, and they even sold it at a great price! Wonderful!”

“You… I was so worried, and YET YOU’RE EATING ICE CREAM SO HAPPILY!! No, wait, you left me behind before doing this. INDEX, STOP INDULGING YOURSELF IN THE DESSERT!!!”

“But pulling me over here would mean that I have to help clear out the fridge, no?”

Staring at the smiling Index, Kamijou felt like he was about to collapse.

“Damn it! And yet you act as if you’re righteous… But I can’t accept this one-sided thanks of yours!”

While Kamijou was stamping his foot in frustration, Index continued to stay in front of him, scooping the ice cream.

Seeing them like this, Orsola just blankly smiled. The Asian youths stared blankly as they communicated in a special language.

So they were the ones who led Index here, Kamijou thought. *So there are Japanese staying around here.*

“Oh yeah, seems like the people who came to help are from the Amakusa.”

The Amakusa Christian Catholics. They were formerly a group of the Amakusa Christians, and were now an organization under the protection of the Anglican Church, like Orsola. They were said to have the special ability to ‘mix into modern life’… *I see*, Kamijou thought. Seeing their clothes like this, he understood.

Though he felt this way,

The whispered conversation that they were having was different from how it looked.

“…That’s the guy that the substitute Supreme Pontiff is keeping an eye on… but how strong is he?…”

“The reason why you’re thinking like this is because you weren’t involved in the battle for Orsola…”

“…He was the one who went unarmed and declared war on the famous 250 battle nuns of the Roman Catholics, you know…”

“And then there’s the latest news from the substitute Supreme Pontiff. It’s said that this guy sent the female Supreme Pontiff-sama flying together with that ‘Seven Heavens Seven Swords (Shichiten Shichitou)’ with just a single punch…”

The Amakusa stopped talking.

The first teenager wordlessly glanced at Kamijou, and then said,

“…Monster?”

“Oi, what’s with you guys making those kind of distorted remarks just by looking at a guy’s face?”

Kamijou lips twitched as he asked. Seeing this expression, the Amakusa turned blue with shock and frantically escaped into the room.

Speaking of which, as he had lost his memory, Kamijou didn’t even know about anything he had done involving Kanzaki, and he feared that his memory loss would be divulged if he asked around. *To hit a girl’s face, what’s wrong with you, Kamijou Touma!?* Kamijou thought angrily.

Orsola sighed and looked at Kamijou, asking,

“…You can’t give that terrifying expression, you know.”

Though she said this, noise could still be heard from behind the door, including ‘and at the end of summer, he saw the Supreme Pontiff’s naked body, took a strike from ‘Seven Heavens Seven Swords’ and didn’t even need a cast!’, ‘WHAT!? She’s a God-recognized Saint! How did he train his body to that extent?!’ and all sorts of curious voices. Is it really that scary?

“And now it seems that I fell to the ground without doing anything at all…”

“Don’t lie on the ground so tiredly, hurry up and come in.”

Orsola pushed the door open as she advised, with Kamijou and Index hurriedly following in.

The place she rented wasn’t a single room like Kamijou’s dormitory, but an apartment with multiple rooms that would allow even an entire family to live inside. In Academy City, most dormitories were like hostels, meant for one person to stay in, so this kind of flat was rather refreshing to Kamijou.

“Wa, the huge room is great… there’s a staircase inside the apartment!?”

“Ho ho, it’s like an attic. Anyway, it’s between the 4th and 5th level. It’s meant to store cheese and is a place where you’ll knock your head if you stand up straight.”

Seeing an awestruck Kamijou, Orsola smiled slightly, and said,

“Alright, let’s prepare lunch.”

One of the rooms was the living room, she did say this before. Index’s eyes were glowing, and in contrast, Kamijou felt somewhat ashamed.

“Eh? But isn’t lunch meant to be a repayment to those helping to move your stuff? And we didn’t do anything yet.”

“Don’t mind it. Don’t mind it.”

“WHAT KIND OF ANSWER IS THAT!?”

Kamijou inadvertently exclaimed, but Orsola quickly got back on topic.

“First, I have to accommodate you. And after that, when all the stuff is done, it’ll be time for dinner. I have to pack everything in order to move houses, which means I can’t take out my utensils and can’t clean my stove.”

I see, Kamijou accepted it.

Looking around, there was a stack of boxes in the living room. Orsola must have requested the Amakusa members to throw away the unwanted items and separate

out the stuff that was to be sent to London. It was true that if she missed this opportunity, she wouldn't be able to settle into her new property as easily.

Part 2

While Kamijou was looking at the different-shaped Italian sockets and Index was playing with the television remote control, switching channels, Orsola's two hands were holding a tray full of cutlery as she walked out of the room.

The main dish was soup with oysters. Other dishes included a crab meat cold soup and something that was dyed black by squid ink and placed on the plate. According to Orsola, it was something made from corn powder and then boiled as a soup, and it could be directly consumed.

Just as Kamijou was about to sit down, an Amakusa girl who was delivering the plates of food said,

"Do you want one?"

She held out a hot napkin.

"Ah, thanks."

Kamijou nodded and received it. The girl just said 'my pleasure, my pleasure' as she frantically walked out of the room. *Double eyelids,* Kamijou thought. He could hear all sorts of noises, including "Itsuwa, how's the battle of the hot napkins?", "Idiot, it's too early now. The most important thing is to give a good impression," "Isn't that a bit too far-fetched?" *What's going on? Aren't they supposed to have lunch with us?*

"Eh, what's wrong with those Amakusa guys?"

Kamijou stood beside the dining table as he asked a question regarding the four teenagers.

“I heard from them that they’re training now. If they don’t follow the designated method to cook the designated food, their reactions will become slow…”

“The Amakusa is a religion that uses all sorts of religious rituals in their everyday life, including sleeping, bathing, and walking. Since the situation is different, they can only eat a limited number of things.”

“Ah, such a troublesome group of people.”

Being prompted by Orsola, who had a somewhat deviated conclusion, Kamijou and Index immediately said “Itadakimasu”.

“Woah, this is great!? What’s this, the soup is so delicious, huh?”

“Mn, it taste 500 times better than what Touma cooks.”

“Don’t say that when you didn’t even help out one bit. But this is really delicious! Delicious!”

With the praise that was mixed with a bit of ill intent, Orsola bitterly laughed,

“I just hastily made these with the stuff that I already have.”

“Hastily made…but the guidebook did mention a few of them. At least we achieved our goal.”

“…Touma, I want to create the best memory of this trip earlier.”

The two tourists here were completely satisfied before they had even seen the world’s heritage that was 20km away. Orsola, who was supposed to be praised, now had to follow their conversation.

“Say… you’re here to see Venezia, right?”

“Sort of; that was our travel plan, but we couldn’t seem to contact the local guide. We had nothing to do after checking in at the hotel. Is Venezia really the leading tourist destination around here?”

“Going to Venezia to sightsee, coming to Chioggia to stay. Can’t drive around in Venezia, the humidity is so high, and the cold floor…”

“Compared to here, the accommodation fee there is several times more expensive.”

Orsola replied without any hesitation.

“But forgetting about those disadvantages, it’s still worth the visit. Besides, it’s called the ‘Water Capital’, ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’, ‘Bride of the Adriatic Sea’… Well, it’s a beautiful city with all sorts of accolades on it.”

“Seems like there are more of the ‘Adriatic Sea’ prefixes.”

Kamijou dipped a piece of the cheese-like colored stuff in some pitch-black squid ink. Though it was covered in squid ink, it was surprisingly mild.

“Ma, Venezia was originally a marine military state controlling the Adriatic Sea, so the prefix is rather appropriate. Every year, Venezia would have a national-level ‘wedding with the sea’ ceremony. At that time…the ruler of the country would throw a gold ring into the Adriatic Sea to symbolise the merging of Venezia and the Adriatic Sea and be closer to it.”

“Eh, Venezia was originally a country?”

Kamijou asked. Index, who was drinking the cold crab meat soup with a scoop, replied,

“Touma, this country called ‘Italy’ was something that was only established recently. Before that, there were a lot of city states on the peninsula. It was somewhat like the Sengoku Era.”

“…”

“What, why are you so silent now?”

“—Nothing. You’re pretty knowledgeable.”

“Wu, what? Saying this just now?”

Index’s vision fell slightly onto the bowl, her face was somewhat red.

Orsola picked up an oyster with her fork as she continued,

“Venezia was one of the powerful city states, and said that she hated being controlled by outside, so she went against the Pope and nearly declared war. She didn’t declare war, but was viewed as ‘an enemy of the Roman Catholic Church’ as she continued to prosper. Besides that, during her heyday, Venezia, together with Padova and Mestre, continued to take control of many city states in Northern Italy and made her name into history.”

“Then what about here?”

“Ah, Chioggia and Venezia were competitive sea city states, and fought several times, that’s about it. In truth, there were many city states in Northern Italy which had salt and foreign imports like Venezia, but due to war, politics, calamities and other sorts of reasons, the numbers dwindled, and finally only Venezia was left.”

Kamijou made a sound in response.

Now, if the history had changed a little, the lasting name would have been Chioggia. Hearing this, Kamijou was somewhat touched despite not knowing too much about history.

It felt like playing a Sangoku-era or Sengoku-era game (changing history).

“No matter what, I do feel that since you’re here, you should tour through Venezia first. For a Christian like me, it’s a very interesting place where you can learn a lot of things. Even if it’s not so, you can tour through and see the beautiful scenery. Though Chioggia has speedboats, she doesn’t have tourist boats. The streets over there have scenes that can’t be seen here. Here in Italy, the only place to escape the vehicles and yet continue to operate as a city is Venezia.”

“Ho, seems interesting. Thanks Orsola. Then Index, we’ll go to Venezia after we clear the stuff.”

“Mn…I just want the food. It’s great to stay here.”

“You… how can you make such an unreasonable request to the person who fished you here?”

Part 3

“Then, let’s help clear the stuff.”

And with that, Kamijou and Index walked towards the items.

Orsola’s house had quite a few rooms, thus everyone was gathered in the same room, sorting out the items that were to be disposed of, and keeping those that were to be moved in boxes. After completing those, they then moved out the heavy furniture like cupboards and the bed, before cleaning the room up and heading to the next one. Orsola and the Amakusa seemed to have finished cleaning 1 or 2 rooms already.

Anyway, Kamijou and company decided to start from the living room. Kamijou wrapped the utensils with newspaper before moving the chairs and table to an outside caravan. The auntie driving the caravan seemed to be an Amakusa member as well.

This work continued to proceed for an hour.

“Wa, Touma, my nun's habit is extremely dirty!”

Index said this as she continued to battle against the pile of dust from the bookcase. Hearing her say this, Kamijou blankly responded,

“Didn’t I say that moving houses would make you dirty?”

“Oh my, you did say it before,” Orsola said.

Hearing this voice coming from beside, Kamijou turned around to look. Orsola was patting away the dust on her nun's habit around her breasts. Of course, that caused a certain body part to jiggle about. Kamijou immediately turned away. Index glared at Orsola, indicating ‘please don’t add on to the commotion when you’re doing this.'

Orsola looked like she didn’t notice it, and said,

“For how long were you on the plane to get here? You should be more mindful

of it. How about you take a shower?”

While Orsola was saying this happily, a huge pile of dust fell from the lampshade onto her, like a black cap sticking on her head.

Orsola continued to smile,

“Come on, Miss Index, the bathroom’s this way.”

“OI!! THE ONE MOST AFFECTED BY THE DUST IS YOU!!”

"Really?" Orsola tilted her head in a cute manner. The huge amount of dust settled on Orsola’s head as she tried to shake it off. She grabbed Index’s shoulder from behind, saying.

“Anyway, Miss Index first. Eh, also, the blowdryer’s over there.”

“What’s a ‘blowdryer’?”

Hearing their words as they left, Kamijou let his shoulders drop, saying,

“Ah, right. Orsola~ where’s the newspaper stack?”

“Over here, no.”

He could hear Orsola’s voice from outside. With a slam, the sound of a door being locked could be heard.

…So girls are really mindful of sweat and dust, huh?

Kamijou carried the thought that if he was to try and confirm this, he would get bitten, and returned to cleaning and tidying the room. He sealed the boxes with tape, and then shifted them to the door. He used the newspaper as a buffer material by using it to wrap a mural, and put it inside a box.

Then,

“Eh?”

At this moment, Kamijou let out a surprised sound. He just so happened to finish up the newspapers.

Though I don't know the value of this mural, it sure looks expensive…if I leave it on the floor, it'll be bad if someone steps on it…

Kamijou let the mop lean on the wall and looked around. He remembered that Orsola said there was an extra stack of newspapers behind the door.

However, upon opening the door, it was not a room, but a short corridor. Two similar white doors were arranged on both sides of the room.

Which is the room? However, I should be able to know by going in.

Without thinking further, Kamijou grabbed the handle. Suddenly, a sound could be heard from inside,

"Hmmmm~hmmmm~."

Such a delighted humming voice, and the sound of rain.

This singing and water means…

Kamijou immediately froze,

Is it the bathroom… Argh, that was dangerous!? Is this the trap called the bathroom!? It's, it's a dangerous place. And I would end up getting bitten!!

Kamijou gently exhaled, then released the handle of the door. By process of elimination, the other door must be where Orsola had prepared the newspapers.

But,

"Hm~hmmmm~hm~hmmm."

There's another voice here? What is this! There's no signboard to designate the bathroom…hm? Italian bathroom?

In this confusing circumstance, the female's unguarded humming made Kamijou's heart pound, but he continued to think calmly. Assuming neither of them were bathrooms, since Orsola had said that "the newspapers are here", then both of them should be normal rooms. Maybe both doors led to the same room?

If so,

Since the wall is thinner here, I can hear the sound from the bathroom on both sides…? One is the bathroom, the other isn't. Damn it, what's going on here!?

Kamijou cautiously listened to the voice and pondered,

Right? No. Left? No. This… is the left. I can hear humming and water from the left, but I can only hear humming from the right door! In other words, the real source of the sound is from the left side, and since the right side is further, the water can't be heard, so I can only hear the humming! Alright, this Kamijou won't just end up seeing other people's naked bodies all the time!

"I got it!"

Kamijou, relying on his ears and with absolute confidence, opened the right door.

What was in front of him was a steamy bath.

"Eh?"

Of course, the one making this surprised sound was Orsola Aquinas. She was pulling away the curtain, reaching out for the bottle of shampoo. With the warm water sputtering out of the showerhead, he could clearly see her huge breasts that were normally covered by her nun's habit. He saw them.

"W…WAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!! THIS IS THE BATHROOM!!!? AND THE SHOWERHEAD IS STILL ON! Sorry, Orsola, but I did hear that the left side is the dangerous one…!!"

In a confused state, Kamijou forgot to close the door as he escaped to the left door.

Over there.

At this moment, he could hear the sound of the blow dryer motor running.

At the same time,

"WAAAAAAAAHH!!!? WHY IS HOT AIR BLOWING OUT OF THIS WEIRD HANDLE…!!!"

BOOM! With that, the left side door was opened from the inside, as a naked Index walked out. There was no point in just holding a towel with one hand. Her slightly red skin didn't seem to be wiped clean by the towel. She moved her limbs, causing the water droplets to fly off her skin. Her long hair was coated with water vapor, sticking tightly to her runway-like chest.

Before seeing this, it has to be noted that beyond the left side door was another bathroom.

Seeing the scene in front of him, Kamijou was speechless.

"THE RIGHT SIDE IS THE BATHROOM, THE LEFT SIDE IS ALSO A BATHROOOOOOM!?!?!? ARE YOU KIDDING ME!!! THIS IS JUST HELL WAITING FOR ME ON BOTH SIDES!!!! ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS!!!! WHY ARE THERE TWO BATHROOMS IN THIS HOUSE!?!?!?"

On realizing that he had nowhere to run, Kamijou collapsed onto the ground. Of course, Orsola was embarrassed as well, covering her body with the translucent plastic curtain, her body backing away slightly.

“Eh, St Barbara promoted the ritual of turning a bathroom into a baptism pool. So one is used for everyday life, the other is used for religious rituals. But since I’m moving house today, I removed the function of it being a baptism pool to use it as a bathroom.”

“IS IT ANOTHER MAGICAL TERM THAT’S NOT SCIENTIFIC!?!? I'VE HAD ENOUGH!!!!!”

Kamijou slammed hard onto the floor as he roars.

At this moment,

“…Come to think of it, why is Touma here?”

In contrast to Kamijou, who was prone on the ground, Index was carefully wrapping her body up with a towel.

“Ha?”

“…And then why didn’t you apologise for seeing other people’s naked bodies?”

“No, it’s not that, Index. I, Kamijou Touma, saw a mural which wasn’t wrapped completely in the room just now. I heard that the newspapers meant to absorb the impact were here, so…eh? Orsola, where’s the newspaper? Any ordinary person wouldn’t put the newspapers inside the bathroom, right!?”

“Eh, it’s not in the room, but at the corridor.”

“GACK…!? Damn it, it’s just placed in the corridor! Damn it, why didn’t you notice it, KAMIJOU TOUMA!? This wouldn’t have happened…”

Saying nonsense to himself, Kamijou suddenly noticed that Index’s temples were twitching unnaturally.

“SAY, SO—WHY—IS TOUMA PUTTING MY NAKED BODY AS A LOW PRIORITY
HUUU

“GGGGGGGGGGYYYYYYYYYYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA! I FEEL THAT TODAY’S INDEX IS TWICE AS TERRRRRRRRRRIIIIIIIIIIFFFFFFFFFFYYYYYYYYYYIIIIIIIIIINNNNNNNNNNNGGGGGGGGGG!!!!”

Kamijou Touma had encountered the intimacy of the teeth twice already in this foreign land. He just hoped that Orsola didn’t think that this was a weird Japanese traditional culture.

Part 4

Being bitten hard, Kamijou rolled on the ground while Orsola continued to clear up the cutlery. At this moment, the sky was getting darker.

“Then I’ll leave it to you.”

Orsola bowed towards the truck driver who was shaking about. She was slightly worried about the brittle cutlery.

No matter what, the moving had already been completed.

Maybe the whole of Chioggia was like this, or maybe it was just this place, but there was no one around. Slightly further away, the voices and laughter of families could be heard.

Orsola was holding onto a rectangular luggage bag as a minimum, saying,

“Sorry to bother the two of you. It’s troublesome to slowly move all of this stuff.”

“No, it’s alright. Orsola, what do you intend to do after this? We intend to go back to the hotel and then go out sightseeing. Do you want to come with us?”

“No, no.”

She gently replied, her hand hiding her blushing face as she looked aside. She

continued,

“I’ll feel awkward if I’m to go back to the hotel with both of you… that adult thing.”

“AHEEEEMMM!!!?”

Kamijou immediately coughed, Index however curiously asked,

“??? Adult stuff? What’s that?”

“It’s best not to hear it!! IT’S BEST THAT INDEX DOESN’T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT!!”

Just as Orsola was about to explain, Kamijou interrupted in a loud voice. Index still didn’t understand anything at all, completely innocent.

“I left my work at London temporarily to come here, and it’s not suitable for me to stay here for long. Also…”

“Also?”

As Kamijou pursued on, Orsola smiled and replied,

“I intend to say goodbye to Chioggia… I don’t want you to see me not being like usual.”

Kamijou suddenly noticed it.

This was where Orsola had stayed all her life, but after today, she could no longer stay here. It was not like she wanted to move. If not to ease the tension between her and this huge organization called the Roman Catholic Church, she wouldn’t move out at all.

Kamijou remembered the time when he saved Orsola from Agnese.

Strictly speaking, that had been not a painless problem.

It was after spending an ordinary day that he had managed to save her.

Even if it was a little compromise, it was for the greater good.

“…Sorry Orsola. I wasn’t very sensitive about this.”

“No, no. It’s not like I won’t ever be back. Alright, please don’t look so guilty. I do feel that London and Chioggia are rather similar.”

Under the starry night, Orsola smiled. Index, who was beside him, wordlessly knocked lightly onto Kamijou’s elbow, most likely hinting him to stop continuing this topic. Even Kamijou knew this, and he had to know this.

“Then, I’ll take my leave. If there’s a chance, hopefully I’ll accommodate both of you in London.”

“Mn, if you have the chance to come to Japan, we’ll do the same.”

“Before that, Touma has to tidy up the room.”

Saying this, the trio began to head off towards their respective destinations.

At this moment,

Index suddenly looked up,

“Don’t tell me… this is…”

Suddenly, she shouted,

“EVERYONE! GET DOWN!!”

Kamijou stared at Index in a surprised manner.

Get down…for what?

From afar, a sound of metal colliding could be heard.

Index’s expression became tense.

“FROM THE RIGHT!!”

The voice rang as if it was reaching the sky.

BANG!

An unnatural sound resounded, causing Orsola's rectangular luggage bag to fly out.

"Eh?"

Orsola looked at the hand that had been holding onto the luggage bag a moment ago in an incredulous manner. The luggage bag gently dropped onto the floor. The metal buckle shattered, and the luggage bag opened like a book. A comb and lipstick dropped out from inside. There seemed to be some back-up food, and the burnt black food rolled down the road into the canal.

Kamijou stared at the luggage bag on the ground.

On the surface, there was an unnatural hole approximately 1 cm in diameter.

"TOUMA, GET AWAY FROM THERE!"

Index's urgent voice could be heard.

Why is she panicking now… is it magic now?

He carried this suspicion as he looked back at Index, but Kamijou froze halfway. There was a very shiny spot on Orsola's clothes, which silently moved from Orsola's shoulder onto her chest.

Like an infrared sight to assist in aiming at a target.

Long range weapon…

"Sniper!? ORSOLA!"

Kamijou threw away the luggage bag in his hand and pushed a dumbstruck Index forward before knocking Orsola in the abdomen.

Charging down the road.

A soft gunshot could be heard.

On Kamijou's back, from left to right, it started to hurt as if it was a string.

His skin was burnt off by something.

From where!? Who!? How!?

Enduring the blood that was flowing out, he looked around. The surrounding rectangular buildings were 5 stories tall, and there was only a straight canal. An outsider like Kamijou couldn't tell whether this place was suited for sniping. Looking around, there was no one with any huge equipment hobbling around. Maybe it was from the opposite direction of where the luggage bag flew, but he could only see the wall of the building. However, Index seemed to know where the attack was coming from, and shouted,

"TOUMA!"

Hearing Index's shout.

Just as Kamijou was about to change his focus from the inside to the outside, an icy hand grabbed Kamijou's neck. Turning back, he could see a hand extending out from the canal beside the road. It was a pitch black hand. Someone was extending their hand from the water's surface to grab Kamijou's neck from behind.

"!"

It pulled Kamijou into the water before he could think of anything.

Losing his balance, Kamijou fell away from Orsola and into the canal. The turbid waters irritated his throat, and the wound on his back was painfully stimulated as if it was about to explode. In his distorted vision, he saw someone walking down the road, their left hand holding onto something shiny and metallic.

A dagger, or in other words, a sword.

You scum… who are you!?

Kamijou extended his hand onto the leg of the attacker, but it was dodged. Kamijou then swung his limbs, gaining enough momentum to float up and appear on the surface.

Maybe it was low tide now, as the water was only several meters tall. But it was enough to obstruct Kamijou's vision.

“Cheh!”

He used both hands to grab onto the edge of the canal and climb up.

The first person in his vision was Orsola. She was kneeling on the floor in an incredulous manner, in what seemed to be the same position that she was in when Kamijou had knocked her down. That expression wasn’t of fear, but shock.

Then,

Right in front of her was the attacker. The short man wearing pitch black priest robes. Like Orsola, there were zips on his shoulders. His back facing Kamijou, the purple-dyed hair was extremely obvious.

In that wet hand, there wasn’t a knife or sword like he expected, but a spear. It looked that it had been forcibly shortened, and on the front tip of the 70cm black wooden handle, there was a 10cm blade.

She’ll die if she’s stabbed with it.

The attacking male raised his hands in full force.

Like he was about to stab the ground.

Kamijou had to stop him, but Kamijou, who had managed to get out of the canal, was still sprawled on the ground. It would take several seconds for him to get to Orsola. At this moment, the spear of the attacker swung down hard.

“Go to hell, bastard!”

Kamijou grabbed the blow dryer from the items scattered from Orsola’s luggage and threw it without thinking.

It hit the back of the attacker’s head.

The spear missed slightly.

The tip of the blade hit the floor, missing Orsola’s head.

“!”

The attacker turned around, rushing towards Kamijou, who was obstructing his mission. That spear was shining with an orange light in this black night. *It is magic, huh?*

Kamijou, who was still prone on the floor, clenched his fist.

“Stab yourself instead!”

The moment Index shouted this, the man pointed the spear back to himself. Now that the male in priest's clothing was unable to control his weapon for some unknown reason, he stopped.

“!”

Standing up, Kamijou lowered his body and slammed into the guy’s stomach, his right fist hitting his face. The force that came from below caused the guy’s head to shake.

“Eh, Ugh!”

Making such a sound, the man intended to lower his vision. Kamijou punched him again.

With a loud sound,

The fist that contained all of Kamijou’s strength hit the man’s nose without any remorse. Finally, the man whose back had been facing Kamijou was knocked down, not moving at all.

No time to stop.

“! WHERE’S THE SNIPER!?”

“No need to worry… it’s over for now.”

“What do you mean it’s over for now!?”

Hearing Index’s words, Kamijou was confused.

Then,

GYYYAAHHH!!

From afar, an indecent male voice could be heard. To a tense Kamijou, Index calmly said,

“To snipe here from afar, it means that he’s sending information of his location to us. Then no matter where he is, my Spell Intercept can mow through it.”

Seemed like Index had done something, but Kamijou didn’t know exactly what.

Suddenly, the sound of footsteps could be heard.

Kamijou looked at a corner of the road, as a man’s figure suddenly leapt out. A hand on his head, he was frantically running around, as if he had heard an explosion. It was too dark for Kamijou to see clearly. The man wasn’t running to Kamijou and company, but into the canal, saying,

“Abbandoniamo l'avanguardia! Ora si ritira di qua! Quella donna la ucciderò sulla nave! (Forget the front! Prepare the retreat ship! We’ll kill the woman on the ship!)”

He seemed to be shouting something in Italian, and just like that, jumped off the edge of the road and into the embankment.

Is the guy escaping the sniper from just now!? Damn it, should we chase him or not?

Just as Kamijou was considering this, the sound of water breaking could be heard.

But,

How could a person jumping into the water make such a large sound?

The surface of the canal broke open.

Like a reverse waterfall, the seawater flowed up, and the man landed on the thing that was coming out.

“Wha…!”

Kamijou held his breath.

From below the canal, a ship appeared. It was like a sailing junk that had 4 masts. What was different about those ships was the material. The ones used to find the new world had been made of wood, but this one that had just appeared was translucent and gave a chilly feeling. It was like it was made of crystal—even the sail and ropes on the mast were of the same material—making one wonder whether it really functioned as a ship. Maybe because of the light reflected from the streets and the moon, the ship was bright like a light bulb.

But,

What was even weirder was the size of the ship.

“WA!”

“TOUMA!”

The canal should be 20 to 30 meters wide, and the side of the ship smashed the embankments, forcing it to become smaller.

“HOW ON EARTH DID THIS THING REMAIN HIDDEN FOR SO LONG!!?”

A large number of motorboats were stopping like a bus stopping in front of a bus stop. Some were crushed and began to sink, some were knocked high up into the air. Kamijou’s fist hit a piece of shrapnel that was flying at Index’s head, but his footing was immediately drowned by the seawater that was gushing in like a sprinkler, as if a child had just jumped into a wading pool, Kamijou’s face was flipped like a face washing plate as he slipped on the ground.

“IT HURTS! WHAT’S GOING ON!?”

Looking up from the floor that was completely drowned, the triangular mast was only 40 meters tall. Also, the ship was still emerging from the seawater.

Kamijou felt it was weird. In fact, he knew that there was a certain depth for the river; it was basically 3 meters deep, so there shouldn’t have been enough space to hide such a huge ship.

The ship jerked.

Right now, the deck was barely as tall as the road, like it was jacked up. At the same time,

“AH…!”

Orsola seemed to be caught on the ship; she had been taken up by the ship from the road. Kamijou couldn't even respond because he was knocked from below by the translucent ship rope.

He was swept up.

During that moment of flight, his feet left the ground. Just as Kamijou lost his footing, the ship tossed him 20 meters high. He was about to fall right next to the ship.

He would die if he fell from such a height.

“!”

Kamijou frantically grabbed onto the handrails of the ship with both hands.

The ship that had been drowned in seawater was now like a 20 meters high cliff.

It seemed to be 7 stories tall; his vantage point was even taller than the surrounding apartments. Kamijou looked around from the ship. Orsola was also hanging on the ship—the side of the ship’s hull should be 100 meters.

“Orsola, get up there!”

Though I would rather not get on this unsolicited thing.

Kamijou ignored the unhappiness in his heart, grabbed onto the ship’s hull that was extremely shiny, and climbed onto the deck.

It was really a big ship.

It was over 100 meters long, the height from the deck to the bottom was about 20 meters. Everything from the mast to the deck was made of translucent material and shined with a mild white light like a light bulb.

Kamijou and company were in the middle of the ship. The ship front and rear

were like a staircase, coinciding at the cabins. It was like they were smack in the middle of a bowl. There were 3 levels up, and 5 to 7 levels down; it was a ship that was even bigger than Kamijou's apartment. The ship was pressing against the embankments, and the seawater that was forced out gradually flowed onto the road.

"This is crazy… for such a thing to emerge from the canal…"

The hull was also made of this magical translucent material. It could reflect moonlight, creating a white light like that of a light bulb.

Though…this feels like glass or crystal, it's not. It's more like ice.

Speaking of practical buildings that were made of ice, the Inuit tribe from Canada were famous for using ice to make 'igloos', but not of this scale.

Kamijou prodded the deck with his finger. It was definitely something similar to ice, as skin stuck to the surface upon contact. It was not cold; it was slightly warm like plastic… but ice freezes at 0 degrees Celsius under atmospheric pressure, which was common knowledge. Under certain conditions however, the freezing and boiling points could be changed. There existed ice at 20 degrees Celsius and steam at 80 degrees Celsius.

It was obviously made from magic.

So even if it was ice, the floor wasn't slippery. The reason why ice was slippery was because the surface of the ice would melt into water, reducing friction. By changing the melting point, even if the ice touched human skin, it wouldn't melt, so there wouldn't be any water on it. This magical stuff was probably similar to Stiyl's Innocentius and wouldn't break even with Kamijou's right hand touching it.

Suddenly, the ship jerked. The impact came from below, and Orsola, who was rather slow, was knocked high.

"AH!?"

"Hang on tight!"

Kamijou immediately reached his hand out from the deck, grabbing onto the

woman. Good thing the female wasn't heavy, but with the unstable positioning, she seemed several times heavier. Breaking out cold sweat, Kamijou pulled Orsola onto the deck.

Just like that, Kamijou and Orsola were lying on the ice.

"Touma! Are you alright, Touma!?"

Kamijou heard Index's worried voice as Index continued to run along.

But Kamijou had no time to reply.

Suddenly, the ship jerked again. This time, it was shaking back and forth in a regular manner. Orsola, who was on Kamijou, slowly approached Kamijou's chest.

Kamijou looked around. Besides both of them, there was no one around. The silent giant ice ship reminded Kamijou of something.

Is it moving forward? Normally, wouldn't such a large ship be unable to move in such a narrow river? Isn't this like a whale in shallow waters!?

In contrast to what Kamijou expected, the giant ship moved forward as if it was an ice hockey puck skating on ice… Thinking further into it, Kamijou realized that if this shining ship was created by adjusting the melting point of ice, it was most probable that the water film created at the bottom of the ship had reduced the friction.

"Orsola, are you alright?"

"Mn…"

Hearing Kamijou's words, Orsola answered uncomfortably. She seemed to have noticed that she was pressing onto Kamijou. Normally stable, she was somewhat puzzled as she nimbly tried to get up— only to lose her balance again.

Even if it was Kamijou, any female, whose clothes were drenched by seawater, sticking onto him would cause his heart to race. But now wasn't the time.

A section below Kamijou's hand, extending from the handrail of the ship to the

higher walls was shining. Leaning out from the ship, Kamijou was stunned. The ice ship continued to force its way, squeezing aside the embankments, swallowing the ferries around, and moving down the canal.

“WHAT’S GOING ON!?”

No matter how Kamijou sighed, what was happening in front of him didn’t change.

And as he looked closely, he noticed something.

“From here, it’s at least 20 meters down…even if it’s seawater below, I’ll probably break a few bones if I jump down. No, wait. This ship is bigger than the canal, yet it can still move forward, so the bottom of the canal is made of stone? Damn it, is the seawater I’m seeing now on the road!?”

The seawater seemed to flow into the gaps between the buildings. He could hear frantic voices from the surrounding buildings— understanding the ‘reason’, all of them were dumbstruck.

“Ah! Wait!”

Suddenly, Orsola stood up.

She just stared at the front, wide-eyed.

“For this to happen…”

“Wha, what? Orsola?”

“This ship is forcing its way forward. Seems like it’s moving from the middle of Chioggia to the Adriatic Sea.”

As Kamijou was wondering what was going on,

“Get down! The Vigo Bridge is right in front! This ship will force its way through it!”

“You kidding me!?”

Kamijou immediately grabbed Orsola from behind. At this moment,

A strong quake could be felt.

The bridge was destroyed in one blow.

“Ack!?”

The hand that should've been holding Orsola released her. Suffering the impact, Kamijou was unable to breathe as he lay on the deck.

Gack…ah! Or, where’s Orsola…!?

Orsola barely managed to support herself on the deck. Good thing that she had managed to fall inside like Kamijou, and was on the floor as well. To be honest, it was a relief. If she flew out, it’d be a 20 meter drop.

Damn it…

In this helpless situation, Kamijou continued to think,

Attacked by some weird people, getting onto an ice ship, getting separated from Index… just what the heck is going on?

Orsola held onto the handrail on the side of the ship, and blankly said,

“We’re leaving…the ground.”

“Ah, where are we going, this ship…”

Adjusting his breathing, Kamijou stared at the land that was becoming smaller and smaller.

But this silence didn’t remain for long.

This time, from afar—actually, from within the ship, many footsteps could be heard.

“Cerca! Loro devono essere a bordo!” (Find them! They should be on this ship!)

Kamijou heard a man’s growl.

Though he didn’t know what it meant, he could feel the animosity in it.

Orsola lowered her voice and said,

“What now, they seem to be looking for us…”

“I know! If we jump off the ship…nope. It’s too dark, I don’t even know which side is which anymore.”

Frantically looking around, there was nothing in the sea. Kamijou idly thought, *are we that far away already?* It seemed that ever since they got onto the sea, the ship wasn’t as tall anymore. Compared to moving around in the canal a while back, they were now floating on the sea. Seemed like half of the ship’s height was submerged in water. In other words, this meant that the sea was a 10 meters drop.

But, to even consider jumping, they would need to be able to swim in these raging waters for a long distance. If they recklessly challenged the sea, there was an 80 to 90% chance that they would drown before they could even reach the shore.

Looking down, this ice ship seemed to be a replica of an ancient battleship. Ten translucent cannons extended out from the side of the ship. Without an oxygen tank, they could only swim at the surface. One could immediately see the unnatural waves from the deck of the ship. If those cannons could really fire, it would be their deaths if they were seen on the water.

Besides, upon seeing that tiny land, Kamijou knew that it was impossible for them to get off the ship.

“Damn it…!”

Footsteps could be heard from all over the ship.

In other words, this wasn’t a safe place.

The light source of the ship itself wasn’t that strong.

Though the surface of the ship was reflecting light, it was rather dark inside.

But even though it wasn’t very bright, the floor and walls were glowing. Kamijou and Orsola’s shadows could be seen, so it was hard for them to hide in

the darkness.

The good news in this misfortune was that, as this 100 meter long ship was extremely big, there were some things for them to hide in, as well as cabins.

“Orsola, get inside the ship. We’ll be spotted if we stay here. Anyway, let’s find a place to hide in.”

“Yes. I know.”

Kamijou grabbed Orsola’s hand, crouched down, and moved along the ice ship.

What was supposed to have been a delightful trip to Italy was now developing towards another direction.

Between the lines 2

Let’s rewind time to a few weeks back.

The bumps on the road caused the wheels of the carriage to jerk. Because of this sharp jerking, nobody on the gradually moving carriage was able to sleep.

Agnese Sanctis was sitting inside the cabin of the carriage. The carriage wasn’t one made of cloth and frames, but a real one made of wood.

Her age was approximately between 10 to 15, and her height was slightly shorter than those of her age. She had white skin and lemon-tea eyes, red hair that was between coffee and blond, and braids that were several pencils thick.

She was clad in a black nun's habit and 30cm thick sandals. Though her clothes were made of highly flexible fabrics, it looked unnaturally clean. Normally speaking, there would be wear and tear when one washed the clothes, but there was no sign of it on her clothes. Just on this point, it was fair to say that she was really eye-catching.

The petite nun looked outside the window.

The rectangular window was about as large as a tray, and there was iron mesh hammered on the outside as if it was a metal net. Though the window was closed, one could sense the faint smell of the tide. On the other side of the glass window was the satellite city of Venezia, which was designated as a worldwide tourist attraction. There were families dragging their luggage around and coffee shop attendants approaching them.

“Is this your first time here?”

At the front of the carriage—the driver driving the carriage asked. As the wooden wall was blocking, Agnese couldn’t see it.

The gruff voice of the middle-aged man was rather special, Italian mixed with some French. *This man should be from Milano,* Agnese guessed.

“Yeah, I’ve never been here before. Though I was born in the north, I am from Milano.”

Due to the way she was learning it, her Japanese was somewhat rude, but her Italian was rather polite.

On hearing how the other person was replying in a similar manner, the driver’s tone becomes even gentler.

“That’s good. I prefer the mainland as well. How should I say it… the air there is fresher, I’ll even feel motivated. But there are lots of things to see here. Even though it’s my job, I do feel that going around sightseeing is an interesting thing. I’m glad that my workplace is in Italy; there are unique things everywhere. I might get sick of it if it was another country.”

Hearing this, Agnese smiled.

She looked out of the window and said,

“There are many wonderful places overseas as well.”

“Really?”

“Yes, because I like new things. Isn’t there a phrase called ‘World Heritage’ or something? After looking there, I would find that it really is worthy of being

hailed as a world heritage. Like the Fontainebleau Garden, it really is a renaissance of plain art involving water and greens. The Cologne Cathedral can be said to be pointing the sharp edge to the sky. As for Japan, before saying whether it's nice or ugly, I have to say that the first thing I felt was an inexplicable feeling."

"I see."

The driver answered flatly.

The carriage continued to move forward. The reason the carriage was so slow was one, because of the driver, and two, because the thing pulling the carriage was not a horse, but a donkey. Obviously, this kind of carriage had no significant horsepower.

"Those people who walk the earth certainly say a different story."

"Not really. Most of the places I go to are in Europe."

"I never had the chance to leave Europe. Because of work, I can only move to where my carriage can go."

"Then if it's outside this area, you'll take a plane?"

"Yeah. But considering the practicality, the ground is much more stable. If we're to tangle with the science side, we can't use spells to prevent escaping… oh my, this topic isn't suitable for you right now."

"Please don't mind. But it's true that there's a sense of pressure when I'm taking a plane."

"Really? Just as I expected. The plane feels like it's forcing itself to fly in the air. If there were a hole, it would collapse due to the difference in pressure. Though this is a special rule in the air, I do feel that it's extremely scary. If it's a hot air balloon, I'll just sit back and enjoy the ride."

"But a hot air balloon is considered a type of plane."

"Ah, is that so? Then no matter what the thing is, as long as it involves the science side, I don't want to get involved with it in the future. Oh, we're here."

Agnese’s body slightly trembled due to habit. The donkey-pulled carriage seemed like it had stopped. Her eyes turned from the window to the two doors behind.

She looked at the door that hadn’t opened yet, and quietly said,

“The destination is… ’**The Queen of the Adriatic Sea**’ and the ‘**Queen’s Fleet**’, huh?”

As if in response to this sentence, the lock on the door opened.

Chapter 3: Aboard the Capital of Water's vessel.
Il_Mare_e_la_Sconfitta.

Part 1

The outside was made of ice, and so was the inside.

The corridor, the walls, the ceiling were made of transparent ice. Even the door, the handle and the bolts on the hinges were of the same material. Some of the items inside would make one wonder whether they could even work or not. The inside of the cabin, which was made of ice, was just like the outside, the walls and floor giving off a faint white glow. Was it the effect of moonlight being reflected like crazy?

The glow wasn’t as bright as sunlight, and though the walls and ceiling could be seen clearly, the space itself was rather dark. It felt like the weak lights in a cinema.

Kamijou and Orsola opened the hatchway linking the deck to the inside of the ship and ran into the nearest room. Nobody was stopping them. Basically, if they were found out, they would be finished. But even without anyone around, Kamijou felt that there was an invisible pressure attacking them. Maybe it was the psychological effect of wanting to hide for safety.

Both of them entered the room, closed the door and leaned on the wall inside. Suddenly, they heard the hatchway being opened and closed. Besides footsteps, they could hear growling in some foreign language. One could hear that they were all males. However, because Kamijou didn’t know anything about the language, and since he was unable to understand the situation from the voices, this made him even more worried.

“Damn it, what’s going on?”

Kamijou muttered.

He had finally gotten a ticket to Italy and came here, and not only had he been attacked by some weird dude, he was forced to ride on this huge ship. It was too unfortunate.

The place where he and Orsola were hiding in should be the fort. A row of cannons were arranged on the wall of the ship, such that they looked like small separated rooms.

From here, one could see the base of the cannons. There were several chairs in front of the cannons, a shelf on the wall, and some large buckets. These were all made of white translucent material—in other words, that was all inside the room. He couldn’t see the gunpowder for the cannons that should be in some buckets or the volleyball-sized shells. Kamijou was unable to tell whether it was because the cannons were all duplicates or if it was because these were magic cannons that would ignore the laws of physics.

From the inside walls to the furniture, the entire body of the ship was glowing. As the texture was the same, it gave a sense of slipperiness. Light was everywhere, but it was hard to read in this situation. This was truly an abnormal space.

“I’m rather mindful about this ship — why must they use such a huge thing to attack us?”

Orsola said uncomfortably. She did have a reason for saying this because the enemy was after her life. When this kind of situation happened, it was naturally hard to counter.

Kamijou remembered the spear-wielding man that had appeared out of the river.

“That idiot who just attacked you… he seemed to be wearing a male version of your nun's habit.”

“Yes, that is priest's attire. If so, the enemy should be the Roman Catholic Church, right?”

“Is it because of The Book of the Law? I can’t think of other reasons that would cause any conflict.”

“But that case should be over ever since I was transferred to the Anglican Church… according to the current situation, if they kill me, it’ll be disadvantageous to the Roman Catholic Church… would they specially make a vessel out of ice, destroy the banks of Chioggia and the Vigo bridge just to get me?”

“Yeah, that’s a bit too much of an overkill…”

Kamijou cupped his head and thought.

In all the magic commotions that had occurred in Academy City and Japan, the magicians seemed like they wanted to avoid exposing the event. But this time it was different; the ship basically had appeared outright, destroyed everything, and then left just like that. Orsola should be quite confused now. Basically, even if a giant ice ship was to emerge from a narrow canal and destroy the streets, nobody would believe it. If they did, wouldn’t the existence of magicians be revealed?

“Where’s this ship going?”

“If the ship is going north from Chioggia, maybe Venice? If not, the only way out to the Mediterranean Sea is south… ah, there’s a window over there.”

The window that Orsola was pointing at was one that allowed a person to aim the cannon, but all they could see was the darkness of the sea. Everything in the horizon was water, and at the end, it was the dark sky; there was no clue to tell them where they were.

Suddenly,

‘BOOM’ an explosion could be heard from the surface of the sea. With that sound, an ice ship, similar to the one Kamijou and Orsola were riding, emerged from the water as if it was a killer whale. After that, 5, 10 translucent ships also appeared. They could only see in one direction, but it was likely that the same thing was happening all around.

The empty horizon of the Adriatic Sea was now covered with numerous ships.

The dark surface of the sea was now illuminated by these weak white lights. The light caused by a ship wasn't that bright, but it was a different matter when there were that many of them.

"…This ship isn't the enemy base, but one of them?"

"The main brigade is here, perhaps they couldn't launch because Chioggia's too small?"

Said Kamijou as he gritted his teeth.

One ship was already hard for them to handle. Now that the scale had increased, it felt like it was harder for them to escape. Now, they would have to abandon the idea of getting off the ship and hide till the ship reached port.

"Really, Index shouldn't have any problems now. Handphone… nope. It's alright

even if a phone made by Academy City drops into the water — I can honestly praise that…that kid's 0-yen phone probably hasn't been on ever since I turned it off before our flight. Can the electromagnetic waves pass through the sea?"

"Ah, my luggage got washed away. All the contents of the luggage got spilled onto the roof, and then this ship forced the canal water out…"

The trunk should have had quite a lot of women cosmetics. Orsola looked a bit awkward, and Kamijou replied in a slightly irritated yet impressed tone,

"…You're really strong, to think of anything after this is over."

"Oh my, cuttlefish isn't Chioggia's specialty, but of Venice."

Hearing Orsola ignore him as she changed the topic, Kamijou really felt weak, but he couldn't keep this up for long.

Ka chang.

The handle of the cabin door twisted.

"!?"

Kamijou and Orsola, who were standing beside the door, were shocked.

Both of them turned towards the door.

It wasn't just a single door being opened.

Numerous doors were being opened. It was likely that all the doors on this level could be automatically opened at the same time, as the sounds could be heard from right to left.

There was nowhere to hide inside the room.

And outside, the person checking through the corridor made of ice with changed melting temperature was suddenly standing in front of Kamijou.

This person wasn't one of those mere grunts.

The one opening the door was a nun. What made her special were her pencil-

thick braids of red hair. She had the cheeky expression of a naughty child with a body even more petite than Index. Though she was wearing a similar nun's habit as Orsola's, her outfit revealed a lot more skin, like a mini-skirt. The thing that made them recognize her was the pair of 30cm thick sandals.

“Agnese!?”

Kamijou couldn’t help but shout out.

Agnese Sanctis.

A battle nun who had led a company of Roman Catholics to try and assassinate Orsola Aquinas because of the incident involving The Book of the Law.

Oi, this is no time for a joke! Why is she on this ship!? Don’t tell me that she’s involved in the incident when Orsola got attacked just now!!

Stunned, Kamijou couldn’t say anything.

“__”

She didn’t seem to notice that the people inside were Kamijou and Orsola. She slightly widened her eyes, and after staring at that boy’s face—

BAM!!

She punched Kamijou’s face without any hesitation.

“ACK…!?”

Being hit like this, Kamijou’s vision started to waver. He could hear Orsola’s little cry. He was almost unconscious, not due to pain, but due to him being unable to react in time. Right away, Agnese stepped forward and punched his waist. Then, when Kamijou was unable to guard himself, Agnese’s small fist targeted the youth’s flank from below.

DONG!! A blunt sound could be heard, as if a hammer smashed into luggage.

An irritating sound reverberated inside Kamijou. After that, Agnese punched down on Kamijou’s back as he was bent in a ‘<’ shape. Kamijou was unable to

fight back, and was only capable of lying down on the ground. After Agnese backed away from him, she turned to look at Orsola.

“Erm…please hold on for a moment…!?”

Orsola frantically opened her hands. On seeing this, Agnese frowned, but she didn’t swing her fist. While she was still alert, she heard…

“…I’m sorry, I’m really sorry. No, I’m really shocked. The back of your nun's habit had such a large hole that I nearly saw your butt — even on your abdomen, there are hand-sized holes; you’re revealing a lot of skin…”

The boy lying on the floor and remaining in the ‘<’ position muttered as if he was reciting a chant.

In this narrow room, Agnese moved away while maintaining her distance from Kamijou and Orsola.

“EH! Over there!!”

She shouted, using the thick soles of her sandals to step on Kamijou’s leg, and pulled up his pants.

“You! As expected, you brought a weapon onto the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea…!!”

The suspicious voice of Agnese suddenly stopped.

What was strapped tightly onto his leg was a backup wallet, as if Kamijou was declaring that he was not used to travelling overseas.

“…”

Agnese remained silent, instead of saying that she felt awkward that her guess was wrong; it was more like she was suspicious of them because she didn’t understand their intentions. After that, she slowly re-estimated the distance between her and the rest.

Though Agnese hadn’t let down her guard, the sticky situation now could be counted as ‘we can communicate without fighting each other’. Orsola gently

sighed, and said more than she normally did,

“I… was attacked by Roman Catholics as I was moving houses, and after that, I had to ride on this ship. ‘The Queen of the Adriatic Sea’…is it the name of this ice ship?”

Seeing Orsola ask in surprise, Agnese relaxed her shoulders. But she continued to keep her eyes on Kamijou, who was on the floor.

“She’s still… is it still a character flaw?”

There was a sense of irritation in her tone, but Kamijou was unable to hear anyone as he continued to lie on the floor.

“—So I’m really sorry, Agnese, and I’ll take this chance to confess that during the first time I met you, you looked rather perverted wearing that mini-skirt nun's habit…!?”

Being kicked in the flank by the 30cm thick sandals, Kamijou bounced up. Agnese repeated her question again, and Kamijou coughed as he got up, saying,

“No… eh, why… why are you angry? Did Orsola say something weird again? Queen of the Adriatic Sea? What’s that? I think I heard of it before.”

“Really, I did explain it to you clearly, you know?”

As both of them didn’t know what the question to that answer was, both of them decided to ignore Orsola first. Agnese looked like she finally let her guard down, saying in a relaxed manner,

“…The name of the fleet is the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’. This is just one frigate ship. Seems like you really do not know what’s going on. Either you don’t know how to negotiate or something, I can tell from your expression that you really do not know anything. If this is also an act, I’m really impressed.”

“What on earth are you doing here…”

“You don’t have the right to ask me that. I’m helping to look for an intruder.”

Agnese then proceeded to say something astonishing.

“However, if you’re the intruders, I can make use of that. If it’s me alone, it’ll be hard to settle this troublesome problem, but it may be faster if I make use of you.”

“Wait a sec…”

Kamijou couldn’t help but blurt out.

Troublesome, problem, hard to settle, make use, it’ll be faster—no matter what the keyword was, it was still dangerous.

“I have an irritating premonition. First, Orsola got attacked, and then I’m forced to ride on this weird ship. We’re just involved in this somehow, and we don’t know what you’re doing here—”

“If you continue to chatter like this, you’re going to get louder and louder. I advise you not to anger me if you want to escape this place. That is, if you want to escape ‘The Queen’s fleet’.”

Kamijou and Orsola stared at Agnese in surprise.

Agnese didn’t mind as she continued,

“However, it’s alright if you don’t want to escape. I can call people to come here and let you die here. How about you jump into the water and swim all the way back to the shore? I don’t know how many kilometers is though, and once there’s a sound on the sea, they’ll fire the cannons immediately.”

Now that she was reminding him, Kamijou had nothing to argue back with.

That was right, this was the sea; there was no way for them to escape. Forget about swimming, even if they were to get a lifeboat, they would be shot down quickly.

Just as Kamijou was pondering, Orsola asked,

“…Is there any benefit for you if you help us?”

“Benefits? We’ll have a lot to talk about if you can think about it.”

Agnese immediately replied.

This already troublesome situation seemed to have taken a turn for the worst. Agnese and the gruff sounding men should be of the same search party, but they seemed to have different motives. Orsola sighed before turning back to Kamijou.

“Looks like we can only listen to what she says. No matter what, if we don’t assist her, we can’t escape, and if she gets angry, the rest of them will rush in here.”

“Humph, at least you’re clear about that.”

Seeing Agnese reveal such a competitive smile, Kamijou carelessly let his jaw drop.

Though the situation had now gotten complicated, he still said in a reluctant manner,

“I’m not really motivated for this, but let’s see what you have to say.”

Part 2

“What’s this ‘Queen’s fleet’?”

In this narrow gunnery room, Kamijou asked this question.

“Well, this is a fleet formed to monitor the Adriatic Sea.”

Agnese seemed to have released her tension now. Though she was still keeping her distance, the tips of her hands and feet were relaxed.

“Right now, we’re collecting data from the starry night, the wind and the surface of the sea. After that, we’ll check a certain part of the Adriatic Sea, and see how much magical energy was used. Because the sea is different from the land, we can’t investigate it like normal. It’ll be terrible if the enemy casts some weird magic experiment.”

“…Monitoring the Adriatic Sea?”

Orsola sounded somewhat surprised and looked around the room that was made of ice.

“But is it really necessary to build such a large facility?”

“We should be able to build it a bit smaller if it’s now, but the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ was built several centuries ago… at that time, a lot of attention was placed on the security of the Adriatic Sea.”

Agnese replied in an uninterested manner.

“There’s also the meaning of suppressing other religions. The organisations of the magic side have been shaken by quite a few recent events. They had to hold some huge event to reorganise themselves.”

If so, the Anglican Church and the Russian Orthodox Church should know about the movements of this ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’. If they didn’t do this, they would not achieve the aim of ‘warning others’.

Upon hearing her say this, Kamijou asked,

“What? Then the higher ups knew about this, yet they choose to remain silent over it? If it’s a containment game, there’s no need to cause such a huge event. Wouldn’t a bigger problem occur if the underlings are to run riot? You see, like now?”

“…Wait a minute. I still don’t know what’s going on. We don’t know what the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ is. If they know of this disastrous situation…”

“Do you think they’ll think that much? In other words—”

Agnese suddenly stopped.

Footsteps could be heard from the outside the door. Agnese placed her ear on the ice door waiting for the footsteps to cease. How many people were there on this ship? The black habit guy who had attacked Kamijou and company, and the coarse-sounding guy on the deck—these guys didn’t seem like they were Agnese’s men.

“But I have never heard of this thing while with the Roman Catholic Church.”

“I didn’t know that as well before I got here. The Roman Catholic Church does have 2 billion followers, and they have quite a lot of deployed squads. All we know are the areas that we’re familiar with or some high level ones.”

“…Now that you mention it, I have no idea exactly how many people are in a company[4].”

Upon Agnese mentioning this, Orsola seemed to start thinking about the deployment and the groupings.

However,

“What? This ship is only meant to be a surveillance facility?”

Kamijou looked stunned as he asked Agnese.

“We were suddenly attacked by the people on this ship, saw a gigantic ship that came out of nowhere and broke the banks, and before we knew it, we’re smack down in the middle of this fleet. Why must we always end up in this kind of situation?”

“Humph.”

For some reason, Agnese snorted.

“I’ll ask you this again: you have nothing to do with the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’, right?”

“I said before, I was in the midst of moving houses. Speaking of which, are my Amakusa friends alright?”

Orsola worriedly asked. Agnese, looking rather tired, sighed and said,

“Don’t tell me you were being watched? You’re people who disrupted the plans of the Roman Catholic Church, so you’ll be on the blacklist, and one of you came all the way from Japan, while the other came all the way here from London, leading a battle group like the Amakusa. All the important people related to The Book of the Law are gathered here, so it’s not weird for you to be

suspected of ‘coming here to do something…’ by the enemy.”

I see, Kamijou tilted his head.

To be honest, it was hard to imagine what the ‘normal response’ of the magic side would be.

At this moment, Agnese grinned,

“However, to feel weird about ‘this facility that’s meant to maintain surveillance’, it seems like you’re rather sharp.”

“What?”

Kamijou asked. Agnese continued,

“‘This facility is meant to maintain surveillance’, in truth, it’s an excuse on the surface.”

“What’s going on?”

“The real reason is that this is a labor facility.”

A tinge of darkness could be seen in Agnese’s smile.

“This place is meant to gather sinners and failures like me, and have them repay the damages done to the Roman Catholic Church. All the people on the ship are from my company… no, they’re from my ex-company. The remaining ones are here to control us.”

If so, was Agnese working here as well? Looking for intruders should be part of the work as well. But no matter whether it was those people that suddenly attacked or the existences that were hidden, he did feel an uneasy atmosphere.

“What are you doing, basically?”

Kamijou asked.

“The basis of the work is extremely simple; the working hours are long, about 18 hours a day. For those nuns who aren’t used to this kind of environment, it’s no different from Hell.”

These words shocked Kamijou and Orsola.

This… feels rather similar to a punishment…

The currently banned form of punishment was called "Long Run".

In other words, the punishment was to torture the prisoners by forcing them to do simple and futile tasks to wear them down psychologically. The more meaningless the work, the larger the impact it was psychologically. This feeling of "working to such an extent yet completely useless" was like the pain of running a marathon and nearly making it to the finish line, only to be suddenly told that they had to re-time the run.

“Then, back to proper business. The price of letting you off is… Sister Lucia and Sister Angelene. They’re my underlings, and I hope that you can save them.”

Lucia and Angelene.

Kamijou didn’t remember them at first, but thinking in retrospect, he remembered that they were the nuns he had met during the battle involving The Book of the Law and Orsola. He had been fiercely attacked by them at the ‘Parallel Sweets Park’.

“However, what’s this with saving them?”

“About that… well, they got what they deserved.”

Agnese sighed impatiently,

“Both of them escaped from the ‘Queen’s Fleet’, most likely to save me and the other nuns. I can only say that I’m really grateful for their kind intentions. They got outside and were preparing to save us.”

Hearing Agnese’s reply, one could feel that she was bored, the tone being rather cold.

“As for the method, well, seems like they could escape the spell that the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ uses to identify enemies… never mind, anyway, they escaped, so you can believe them.”

What was the point of asking someone to save somebody who had escaped from a prison? Before asking this question, Kamijou thought of the answer.

After they escaped, they had been caught again.

“So after they got caught, they’re being lectured?”

“How can it be just a lecture?”

Agnese looked uninterested as she said,

“…This is a prison. Including me, all the nuns here are criminals to the Roman Catholic Church. The most important thing is to ‘seal the escape hole’ in order to prevent prisoners from escaping. But this isn’t an execution ground, so they won’t kill them just for the sake of sealing the exit. The most they’ll do is to add extra labor, forcing those two to be unable to use those spells.”

“What do you mean by extra work?”

Kamijou casually asked. Orsola frowned, and as if she was trying to confirm it, asked,

“Forbidding them to use magic, you mean taking away their reasoning? Destroying their brain structure?”

Hearing this, Kamijou sat on the icy surface, wide-eyed. Though he hadn’t heard of the exact way, it sure added on to that irritating image.

Agnese sighed,

“They’re not corpses that are meant for an Uetara spell (some spell used to control corpses), just mindless labor alone is enough to make people sick of it. Thus, I hope that you can save them before they end up like that.”

She scratched her head in frustration,

“…Just those two for now. The other nuns have the minimum amount of food and clothing given to them, so it looks like they don’t have the strength to fight back. As for those two, if we save them before their brains get destroyed, we can get the spell to escape the prison.”

“But wouldn’t the Roman Catholic Church know of this escape spell?”

“The ‘Queen’s Fleet’ has a lot of things to do. Only the higher ups know about the specifics. As they have already deployed people here, the Roman Catholic Church won’t really care about one or two people escaping; they’re not stupid enough to focus on something trivial and neglect the major things.”

After motivating herself for a bit, Agnese said,

“So if we want to escape, this is our only chance. If you two are willing to help, this problem will be easier to settle. I want to create a distraction, so I have to go to the flagship of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. During this time, please think of an idea.”

In other words, there was a way to go from this escort ship to the flagship? Since this was a magic facility, there might be some strange bridle device.

“…You’re willing to help us?”

“Not help, I’m going to use you. If you don’t, I won’t be going to the flagship. On the contrary, I’ll go and report to them.”

Agnese maliciously twisted her lips as she said this. Seeing her like this, Orsola just smiled and said,

“Alright, alright. You don’t have to say such words to hide your embarrassment. You wouldn’t tell us all this if you didn’t want us to help you.”

“Eh!? Wait… why are you hugging me all of a sudden!?”

Agnese was now being hugged by a kind Orsola, her face stuffed in Orsola’s breasts. Kamijou instantly turned his head away to look away, and a cracking sound could be heard.

Right now, the important thing was—

“You just said that we have to think of a plan during this time… aren’t you captured as well? Then come and escape with us.”

Kamijou asked as he looked up from the floor and stared at Agnese.

Hearing this, Agnese broke free from Orsola.

“I have a symbolic purpose.”

“…I don’t really understand what you mean.”

“I’ll explain it simply. Most of the people on this fleet are members of my captured squad. The people watching them would be most worried about a rebellion among the workers. Basically, I’m a psychological safety mechanism that’s meant to prevent this from happening. Say… for example, like how a leader among the prisoners is meant to control all the prisoners.”

She smiled sarcastically,

“In the ex-Agnese’s forces, I’m the one with the most influence. If I submit completely to the ‘Queen’s Fleet’, my squad members will think ‘I can’t do it if she can’t’…this is basically just a mistaken view.”

Agnese sighed gently.

One could tell that she had the authority to do this if she was able to act on her own. It felt like Agnese was looking for Lucia and Angelene.

“Though I’m imprisoned, I do have the freedom to walk around the fleet, and so I’m excused from labor. Besides the basic meals, I have the luxury of choosing coffee or fruit juice after a meal. Not bad, huh? In order to maintain this comfortable life, I have to make everyone work.”

“…”

“To me who’s enjoying the treatment of being like a guest, Sister Lucia and Sister Angelene efforts should be considered a waste, they’re like fools. The other nuns are all so obedient, so if they want to defy any further, they could have just escaped on their own. Yet they came all the way to this tightly guarded room and told me, 'We’ll save all of you'.”

It was hard to hear any sense of seriousness in Agnese’s voice.

But these words continued to echo out from her mouth,

“They didn’t even need to escape; I have no obligation to work. All I needed to do was to wait on the sofa, and one day, I can return back to work. Don’t you find that pitiful?”

Hearing Agnese’s words, Kamijou couldn’t help but feel impatient. It may be a troublesome thing to the people involved, but did she need to use that tone to say it?

“So, what are your intentions? Anyway, if you want to safely escape from the fleet, you still need their assistance. Though it’ll be troublesome, try your best.”

“What do you mean by ‘try your best’?”

“This is just my honest opinion. On a side note, if you can escape here safely, don’t ever get involved with the Roman Catholic Church again.”

Though Kamijou didn’t like the tone, Agnese was right. They couldn’t keep hiding in the same place. They had to do it fast if they wanted to escape, and the means of escape was right in front of them.

Kamijou sat on the floor, slumped as he sighed heavily.

“…I know. But we’re outnumbered; there’s a chance that we won’t be able to save them.”

“Is that an appropriate line for a man who challenged 250 nuns?”

Looked like she recognized Kamijou’s ability as an enemy. Agnese laughed in an ironic manner before bending down and extending her hand out to Kamijou, as if she wanted to hold Kamijou’s hand.

Seemed like she wanted him to stand up.

“Oh, thanks.”

Kamijou immediately reached his right hand out and grabbed Agnese’s hand.

Just as he grabbed the slender fingers, and the cloth of the nun's habit—

Rip

The stitches on Agnese’s habit broke apart instantly, causing her clothes to drop down.

“Oh my…”

Orsola put her hands on her face.

“Well, I did feel that the design was somewhat weird. So this revealing nun's habit has a magical binding effect.”

This was now pointless.

Right now, the most important thing was that in front of Kamijou, Agnese, who was still bending down, was now wearing only undergarments, cute white laced underwear. As the hole in the back was extremely big, she wasn’t even wearing a bra. As she was bending down, the little chest was amiably advocating its presence.

At first, Agnese revealed an unexpected look. However, once she started to look down…to confirm how she looked now…

“WAAA—”

She finally started to scream.

“——!!??”

Kamijou and Orsola suppressed Agnese from behind, covering her mouth to avoid causing a commotion.

Part 3

Index was standing on the dark street of Chioggia.

This little waterfront street was in the midst of chaos. The historic banks and

bridge had been destroyed, but the questions of “what should we do?” were even bigger. With the people who had seen this terrible situation raising questions, and with many different people voicing answers, more questions were created, and answers get repeated.

The seawater-covered roads that were up to 100 meters away from the canal before flowing back into other parallel canals. As the ship had left, the overflowed water started to flow back into the canal, but some water had flown into houses, especially restaurants and cafes, where the buildings meant to cater to guests were lit up, and frantic sounds of people sweeping could be heard.

Among them,

Index stood blankly at a street, staring in the direction where the ice boat had vanished.

“The ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’… related to the history of Northeast Italy.”

The words she spoke had lots of knowledge behind them.

“Hm, it should be one of those escort ships among the ‘Queen’s Fleet’.”

Her mind was busy scanning through the knowledge of 103,000 grimoires, pulling out the necessary knowledge and removing unwanted information. She started to guess whether these were correct, and continued to hypothesize them in her mind.

If so, the Roman Catholic Church is responsible for this. But why send the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ to attack?...Orsola Aquinas and the Amakusa. Are both of them the reason? If they want to use the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’, Touma and the rest shouldn’t be much of an obstacle.

This time, her mind was thinking of how to counter it.

If the enemy is the ‘Queen’s Fleet’, I alone can’t handle it when I don’t know how to use magic. No, it’s at a level when even a mage can’t fight it one-on-one. But if this continues, Touma and the rest… will…

Index looked up.

She looked around before running off in a certain direction.

Part 4

Kamijou and Orsola had been chased out of the room.

Agnese had borrowed a sewing purse that Orsola had and said in a low voice,

“…Anyway, I’ll be exposed if my clothes aren’t well done. Hurry up and go.”

She then started to sew her specially-made habit. After mending it, she would most likely head to the flagship.

There was no point in worrying about it now.

Kamijou exposed only his head from a corner on the corridor, checking the situation in front of him.

Moonlight was reflected wildly on this straight corridor that was made of ice that had its melting point modified, like the shine of a white light bulb. Different from a normal ship, the corridor was extremely narrow. This should be a characteristic of a warship. It felt like if people gathered, it would be so packed that nobody could move about.

Like a cinema with screens on all four sides, the floor and the walls were rather obvious, but the hollow part of the aisle was rather difficult to see. Kamijou narrowed his eyes as he looked around.

“…No one’s here.”

“Just like Agnese said.”

Just as Kamijou and Orsola said this, they walked out of the corner and moved forward.

It took them quite a while just to confirm that no one was around. A lot of

courage was required to take the first step.

Agnese had said,

“The fleet’s control, operation and attacks all rely on magic. More than half the people on the fleet are originally from my company, and there’s a danger of them revolting if the fleet relies only on them. The squad has about 250 company, and the number of ships totals about 100. After calculations, there are only a few people controlling many workers. Of course, they would have done quite a lot of work. But because of that, there are loopholes.”

It seemed to be that way.

But if the ship is manned automatically, what are the nuns’ jobs?

He had heard that their work was just some simple menial labor, but he hadn’t asked for the specifics. He would just ask Lucia and Angelene after he saved them.

Even if they had confirmed that no one was in the aisle, they couldn’t get rid of the nagging insecurity that they may be ambushed. They were wary that there could be people hiding behind the straight rows of doors, or around the tight corners of the corridor.

According to Agnese, Lucia and Angelene had been taken to the 3rd level. The place where they kept the useless workers should have been a cabin near the bottom of the ship, but it seemed like the psychological control center to ‘force people to be unable to use the escape spell’ was upstairs.

The duo climbed up the steep cliff-like stairs.

Part of the corridor on the 3rd level consisted of windows. There was an entire row of gunnery rooms below the deck. As the top of the structure didn’t need a gunnery room, the walkway was positioned on the outside.

“Oh my.”

Orsola casually looked outside the window.

Kamijou looked at where she was looking, and suddenly gasped,

“…It’s definitely not an ordinary method.”

Though this was the third level, it was counted from the deck. In fact, it was about 10 meters from the deck to the surface of the sea, so the view from here was about 5 levels high.

It felt like looking down from the top of a lighthouse, but what was below was a huge fleet. Like this ship, a fleet full of giant ice ships, like fish covering the sea completely. Just by looking outside the window, one could see more than 50 of them, all of them giving a white light bulb-like glow, covering the dark surface of the sea with a layer of light.

“Hm?...Agnese has started to move as well?”

While mindful of his surroundings, Kamijou stared outside the window.

Between the ships, arch bridges could be seen. There was a small figure moving about. After the figure moved away, the ice bridge vanished. Looked like she had started on her distraction strategy.

The place which Agnese was moving to was most likely the ‘flagship’ that she had talked about. In the middle of all the ships, several hundred meters in front, a larger ship was surrounded by many ships. The length and breadth was about three times as large as this escort ship. It felt like looking down at a city from the top of a castle.

Kamijou looked back inside.

“I don’t want to count how many… but the largest religion sect can’t be underestimated.”

“…It’s more like this entire fleet is as big as a city.”

As Kamijou proceeded on, he thought that their priority wasn’t to ‘engage in combat’, but ‘to escape’. And Lucia and Angelene knew the key spell required for them to escape.

“—eh!?”

Once Kamijou reached the corner, his thoughts got interrupted. He pulled

Orsola’s hand as he leaned his body against the wall.

He timidly revealed his head out from the wall.

The room that Agnese told them about was ten meters ahead.

There was someone guarding the room.

No, was that really human? That giant rock-like ‘thing’ that was blocking the door was a 3-meter tall golem made of ice. The sculpture was giving off a light-bulb like color, and the transparency level was rather low. The entire thing looked like it was some kind of heavy equipment. Wielding a pole…it should be some kind of rod or stick, right? But it looked more like it was wielding a rectangular steel frame that had been cut off.

Kamijou retracted his face, his back leaning on the edge of this slightly shining wall.

Damn it, that thing can’t be taken down in a hit… it’ll be bad if there’s help when we’re fighting it.

The walkway was extremely narrow, there was no real way to escape. If there were ten or more people rushing in from the back, it would be hard to even graze past them. After that, the ending would be that they would lose under the condition that they were outnumbered.

“Damn it…”

Kamijou cursed. Just as he was trying to confirm how narrow the corridor was—

DONG!!

With this sound, his vision was blocked by the light-bulb colored ice.

At first, Kamijou didn’t know what the thing in front of him was.

The ice statue that had been just guarding the door around the corner had passed through the corridor in an instant, turning past the corridor… it took him quite some time to realize this.

The feet of the golem glided to the side.

When the melting point was changed, ice wouldn't melt, so it couldn't glide. But on a closer look, the tips of the toes of the golem were touching the floor, as if it was swimming on water.

But Kamijou was unable to calm down and check it.

Wha…!?

Kamijou's eyes widened in surprise as the ice sculpture's wrists moved before his eyes. It was a strike from below to above. The steel frame-like stick easily pried the thick floor, moving towards Kamijou's body without a loss in momentum.

The weight and speed was enough to smash this place like an empty container.

"Eh!—YAAAAHHHH!!"

The wind pressure touched Kamijou's cheek just as he was avoiding. While he was knocked aside, Kamijou knew that he couldn't avoid it. He swung his right hand in reflex, not caring as he slammed his palm down to take on the incoming attack.

PIANG!! The sharp sound echoed throughout the ship.

Irritatingly cold sweat emerged from Kamijou's palm to the shoulder and elbow.

"…Ugh"

Kamijou couldn't help but let out a groan.

The huge piece of golem in front was not moving either.

Pachang! The rod that the ice golem was holding onto broke in half. The shoulder holding the pole then started to break, and there was a crack down from its chest to its abdomen. Its thighs and kneecaps also started to crack, before the entire thing collapsed sideways.

Crack.

As the ice broke apart, the degree of refraction changed, the glow surrounding the golem disappeared.

Orsola, who had been holding her breath till now, finally made a sound.

“Are… are you alright?”

“Sort of.”

Maybe he was thinking too much, but Kamijou felt that his wrist hurt.

“Broken…this, is kind of like a magical robot, right?”

“Hm…this isn’t a stone golem. Instead of it, it’s more like a part of the ship has changed shape. In terms of a fleet’s attack, it’s more like a cannon aimed inside…or something like that.”

Orsola touched the ice statue that was rolling on the floor, slowly reading every single word and sentence slowly.

“A part of the ship…?”

Kamijou touched the wall nearby gently with his right hand, but the thick ice didn’t break.

…*This is a golem that uses magic to maintain itself, so does it have any difference as compared to the ship’s wall which has transformed completely?*

He pondered, but there was no time to verify his doubts.

(Even though…)

Luckily, that golem is made of magic, Kamijou thought as he felt really relieved. If it was just a head-on fight, he didn’t know whether they would win even if they had a modern-era tank; Kamijou could have been beaten in an instant.

Anyway, he didn’t win by his ability, but by the special characteristics.

Kamijou now walked around of the corner and into the empty corridor.

“Then, we’ll go and save Lucia and Angelene. Though it’s somewhat

troublesome.”

“Regarding that,”

Orsola said worriedly,

“Is it possible that the room has only Lucia and Angelene inside? There should be some mages torturing them using magic. If we open the door like that, we might start a battle.”

Orsola picked up an ice block that was on the floor. It was the one the ice golem was holding, the rod that was cut in half. She looked like she was holding onto a musical instrument with both hands.

“This will be my weapon.”

She revealed a smile that definitely didn’t fit the atmosphere.

And,

“This and… that, hm, that looks strong.”

After saying this, she picked up the leg of the ice golem. It’s attack power should be equivalent to that of a large rock that’s used to crush things, right?

“…Really?” ‘‘But it sure looks useless’’.

Kamijou swallowed his words.

“The rest is up to fate. We can only pray that this kind of thing doesn’t happen consecutively.”

“Alright, I’m done. Let’s go.”

Kamijou and Orsola nodded to each other and began running down the corridor. Their pessimistic view of wanting to avoid being seen in the corridor was much stronger than their enthusiasm to fight.

Both of them reached the door.

While grabbing the handle of the door, Kamijou noticed that the door wasn’t

locked.

To be honest, they were afraid, but continuing to hesitate wasn’t a solution. They opened the door without hesitation.

A loud sound echoed throughout.

“Eh!?”

It was a neat room, it looked like... it looked like a doctor’s clinic. Even so, the beds were made of ice as well. To be honest, Kamijou didn’t know what it did.

There were about 7 men and women inside the room. Among them, two of them were wearing habits with yellow sleeves and skirts. They were Lucia and Angelene. Both of them were wearing gold rings that were secured tightly on their cloth headpiece. The remaining five people were unhealthy men that were skinny like needles. They seemed to be researchers, and they had pitch-black habits on. On the ice table nearby, there were many metal rods that were for some unknown purpose, and these were the only things that weren’t made of ice. The tips of the metal rods were as sharp as a pencil. The unique shininess that was like a cinema made them even more mystifying.

They couldn’t see an ice golem anywhere.

But in terms of numbers, 1 on 5 was still disadvantageous for Kamijou.

Cheh…!!

They would lose if they took them head on, Kamijou thought, ‘‘we have to take them down while they’re still shocked’’ as he took a huge step to the middle of the room.

But.

A person suddenly stepped in front of him.

“Don’t move.”

The one saying this was Orsola Aquinas. She tossed the ice block that she was holding onto the floor. The remains of the rod landed on the floor together with a

heavy sound. Instead of saying that she threw them, it was more like the ice block had slipped out of her hands.

The Roman Catholic men, who heavily outnumbered them, stopped in unison.

“How do you think we broke this?”

Said Orsola confidently and reached her hand into her sleeve.

Kamijou stared at his right hand, still wondering what Orsola wanted to do.

The enemy didn’t know anything about the Imagine Breaker.

“Oh my, I casually spoke some Japanese unknowingly, can you people understand? It’s alright if you don’t. If you don’t listen to my warning, I’ll use this.”

After saying this, Orsola reached her hand into her sleeve.

“Wait…”

One of the men spoke in Japanese.

Once the other party made a response, it meant that they were starting to concede.

“…What kind of spiritual item are you hiding inside?”

Before Orsola could reply, the other man said,

“If it’s just ice, you could have broken some normal ice and carried it in.”

“Oh my, then does this ship have this kind of thing?”

Orsola tossed another ice block.

This time, it was the leg of the golem. The shape was a lot more intricate than the rod, as it was part of the kneecap that was smashed.

“__”

The men backed away.

In contrast, Orsola forcefully moved forward by one step.

“As for your problem just now, if you want to know how I did it, then it’ll be alright to let you see it. However, you’ll be turned to ash before you can see it clearly. Oh my, since you still need a bodyguard, I really wonder if you can take it?”

As she shook her sleeve gently, the men were terrified to death. Even Lucia and Angelene, who weren’t involved, were looking slightly fearful.

Kamijou was marveling at this.

To use this technique of bluffing on them, one had to first accurately predict the enemy’s capabilities before using it.

“Then, please tie their hands and feet up.”

Orsola smiled to Kamijou as she said this.

Part 5

The Roman Catholics surrendered easily.

As Orsola had bluffed that she had a ‘secret weapon’, Kamijou couldn’t just go near them just like that. Thus he was only in charge of tying their hands and feet. The entire ship was made of ice, there was nothing that could be used as a rope. In this hopeless situation, Kamijou could only undo the men’s belts and use them. Kamijou really hoped that there wouldn’t be a second time of doing such a disgusting thing as removing a man’s belt.

Once Kamijou confirmed that the men were tied securely, Orsola finally let out a sigh before removing her hand from her sleeve. It looked like she was even more nervous than what she let on. Orsola turned towards Lucia and Angelene and

said,

“We’re here to save you.”

Hearing her voice, both of them backed away.

The nuns seemed to be wondering why Kamijou and Orsola were here.

Kamijou thought, *such a radical duo*. The short one was Angelene, while the tall one was Lucia… or that should be it. Angelene was blue with shock, her teary eyes staring over, grabbing onto Lucia’s waist. In contrast, Lucia’s white face was slightly blushing due to defiance against an enemy, looking for weaknesses. She placed a hand on Angelene’s shoulder, while Angelene was clinging onto her tightly.

Both of them were wearing a similar type of black habit as Orsola, but with yellow sleeves and skirts attached. Was this the clothing of the workers? In contrast to the short sleeves that Lucia had, which revealed her slender white arms, Angelene’s wide sleeves only revealed her fingertips.

“…Here to save us? Do you think we’ll believe that nonsense? We’re here in this place because we lost to you.”

Lucia continued to let out a low voice full of wariness. Angelene, though, was terrified to the point of her teeth chattering, such that Kamijou was more worried about Angelene’s condition than Lucia’s antagonistic pressure on him.

“We… didn’t come here because we want to ride on this ship. Actually, we were being hunted by Roman Catholics for some ridiculous reason, so our primary objective is to leave the ship.”

There was no point in hiding it, so Kamijou just revealed everything.

“According to Agnese, you know the key magic spell to get away from this place. They need your help to get away from here. So she wanted us to save you before some weird punishment.”

“Sis…Sister Agnese said that…?”

Hearing the familiar name, Angelene’s face became a lot more cheery, the

frightful look slowly dissipated. She was probably such a lively kid.

However, Lucia tidied her slightly short sleeves, pressing down on Angelene's head from above.

"Sister Angelene, those are the words of an infidel. Can you please consider the possibility that it may be a trap?"

"So…sorry! But…but…those people have just seen Sister Agnese. Maybe she may have…"

"That is why I'm saying that that's only our wish! They know our relationship with Sister Agnese, so they could have lied to bait us!"

While Lucia continued to press down on Angelene from above, Angelene's body became smaller and smaller, and she would sometimes glance at Kamijou once or twice.

(Damn it, I could have just asked Agnese to write a letter.)

How are we going to explain this? Kamijou sighed. In truth, it was just as what they feared; Kamijou and Agnese didn't really have such a good relationship. There was no harder way to do this than to talk it out.

At this moment, while Kamijou was still frustrated, Orsola said,

"Then, why do you think we're here?"

"Eh?"

"Just as you feared, this is the base of the enemy. We came here by beating the guardians. What other benefits do you think we'll gain by risking our lives and coming all the way here besides coming to save you?"

Orsola again glanced at the men that were tied up and chucked into the corner.

"…About that…"

Lucia looked somewhat lost before she could finally utter a word.

But before she could arrange her thoughts, she stopped midway.

“We can’t possibly be here just to be enemies with you, right? Even if we don’t care about you, we can’t even guarantee our own safety. In this situation, why do you think we came all the way here, and even using Agnese’s name to save you? I can’t think of any other reason.”

Orsola glanced at a corner of the room.

The men that Kamijou tied up were over there.

“__”

Hearing Orsola’s words, Lucia didn’t say anything.

As for the question that got no reply, it was due to an alternative of creating a scenario such that the other party was unable to reply, instead of trying to convince the other party. Deep inside, Kamijou was really amazed; this was really a powerful negotiating tool. They didn’t even need to make any concessions or excuses to shut the other party up; this didn’t feel like Orsola’s usual method in handling this.

She stealthily whispered to Kamijou,

“…My job is to convince those people who do not know about God in the pagan lands.”

Maybe relying on this kind of language was her specialty.

Lucia looked like she was searching for something, as she exchanged glances with Kamijou and Orsola. After that, she said,

“What you mean is that without this value of helping others, you wouldn’t have bothered with us?...you’re really opportunistic, huh?”

“Sister Lucia!”

Angelene moved her wide sleeves as she continued to tug on Lucia’s waist. The taller Lucia sighed tiredly,

“I got it. Your words make sense. Also, Sister Angelene, didn’t I tell you that it’s itchy if you pull the cloth near my thigh?”

Hearing her say this, Kamijou turned away for some reason.

Maybe they were all girls, so they were not really mindful about it?

Seeing Kamijou blush as he turned his head away, Lucia scowled.

“What are you thinking about?”

“No…nothing! Nothing at all!”

Kamijou tried his best to change the topic back.

“No…oh ya, I do want to get away from this weird ship as soon as possible. Basically, how do we do it? The necessary tools were confiscated, right?”

“No…no problem. If it was as easy as confiscating our tools, they wouldn’t do this to their fellow Roman Catholics just to prevent this escape spell from being used…”

“Sister Angelene, if you’re really serious about this, then I’ll reward you with a pat on your head.”

After saying this to a sullen-looking Angelene, Lucia casually said,

“Let’s make this clear, no matter whether we swim or move on a rescue boat, we can’t get away from the security of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. And once we’re found out, we’ll be the target of many huge cannons.”

“…Hold on. You two did escape from here, right? Did you fly away from here or something?”

“Even if we do that, we’ll be fired at by anti-air cannons…it’s too troublesome to explain it. We’ll perform it to you. Sister Angelene.”

“Yes, Sister Lucia. Ah…that, no matter your intentions, thank…thank you very much! Almost, this spell almost got broken with our minds.”

Angelene wanted to say her thanks, but frantically got back to work upon being prompted by Lucia.

Lucia and Angelene’s palms were touching each other, but their palms weren’t

sticking tightly. On looking closely, they seemed to have considered which fingers were to touch each other and which ones weren't.

"Normally, the tool used to cast magic is by a special item that the caster finds suitable to use…"

Orsola said in a somewhat impressed tone,

"But they used the clothing that's used to contain them as a temporary tool. In this spell that has two people's power in it, to cast a different magical power as the original, resulting in a completely different magical effect. For them to actually think of this in this confined situation is…"

This was probably like using a normal and unnoticeable item like a spoon or a shoelace and maximizing its use such that the user could escape from an impenetrable prison.

Just as Kamijou was thinking about this, something happened.

Lucia and Angelene raised their hands that were on each other; it looked like an international dance. After that, their fingertips touched the cupboard that was made of ice that was giving off a white light bulb glow.

Like a pupil in the eye expanding, a large hole 1.5 meters in radius appeared on the translucent cupboard.

"This is one of the spells that uses the ice ship. It can be used to open such a hole, and through this hole, the seawater can be solidified to form an underwater pathway down to the bottom of the sea, and escaping from here."

"W…we cut off a bit of the ice to check the composition. The 'Queen's Fleet' specializes in sea surface defense, but it's hard for it to defend against what's inside the sea…IT HURTS!"

Once Angelene scowled, the huge hole on the cupboard closed up. The palms of both girls separated, as sweat flowed down Angelene's temples.

She shook her head slightly.

"The…binding clothes really added on a counter-spell."

It hurt, Angelene muttered as she pressed against her temple. The gold ring was tightly secured around the nun's headdress.

"This can be solved by destroying part of the binding function. Magic was cast on the sewing and weaving of the cloth, so by following the pattern and destroying them in order, there'll be no problem."

Lucia picked up an ice pen, which did not seem to function anyway, off the table.

Destroy? Kamijou turned to stare at his right hand.

"Then…wouldn't my fist be faster!?"

Just as he said this, a slow impact hit him on the back of his head.

Turning around, Orsola had a hand on her face and a clenched fist as she said,

"Alright then, you don't want those two to be completely naked, right?"

"IT HURTS! Okay, it's my fault! I'm sorry! But why are you so angry—IT HURTS!!!!"

Seeing a smiling Orsola swing a few punches, Lucia and Angelene tilted their heads in confusion. They used the ice pen to poke small holes onto the binding yellow sleeves. In this situation when only the walls and ceiling were glowing and the middle couldn't be seen clearly, this precise work seemed very tough. But Lucia and Angelene were doing it without hesitation.

"An underwater pathway, so is it like a slide? If it's slow, won't the 'Queen's Fleet' catch up?"

"No, ac…actually, it's rather fast. The fastest…is…is about 300km per hour."

"The average speed is 90km per hour, because friction will slow us down."

On hearing this, Kamijou's face turned green. Wouldn't 300km per hour be like the Shinkansen? Would their breathing be alright? He was really mindful about how to reduce the speed. But since Lucia and Angelene were so energetic even after trying this, there shouldn't be any problem. However, he really didn't want

to use this spell that used some supernatural theory. He glimpsed at his right hand for a while. It was alright as long as he didn't destroy the path…

Kamijou's eyes were staring at the movement of the nuns' hands.

"Anyway, as long as we have that, we can escape from here immediately. Right?"

"…Actually, it's a lot more complicated."

Angelene replied,

"This underwater pathway is made by seawater, so we need to get to the bottom of the ship."

"We'll make a hole at the bottom, and use the seawater to make a channel pathway. Once we get down, we need to seal up the entrance at the ship. By getting away from the bottom of the ship, it'll be hard for the 'Queen's Fleet' to catch up with us."

It seemed that they couldn't relax though. In contrast to Kamijou, who was sighing, Lucia and Angelene looked rather optimistic.

"Sister Lucia, we must bring Sister Agnese along with us."

"If possible, I hope that it won't be just her, but Sister Agnese remains our top priority. If she doesn't move, the other Sisters won't move. OI, SISTER ANGELENE, YOU CAN'T OPEN A HOLE THERE!"

Lucia frantically grabbed Angelene's hand.

Maybe she was letting her guard down slowly, as her movements were somewhat rough and she was showing more emotions. Though it was a small change, one could feel the expectations hidden in her.

"Whe… when can we meet up with Sister Agnese?"

"It's not so simple. She may be working secretly."

At this moment, Kamijou wondered if he should say something.

He remembered Agnese's words.

"I have a symbolic purpose."

She definitely wanted to go and save Lucia and Angelene herself, but those words sounded very cold, as if she was a bystander.

"Not bad, huh? In order to maintain this comfortable life, I have to make everyone work."

Most likely, these words had been said more out of pity and compassion than care for her comrades. To Lucia and Angelene, who wanted to stand alongside her, these words would hurt them all the more.

"To me who's enjoying the treatment of being like a guest, Sister Lucia and Sister Angelene efforts should be considered a waste."

Kamijou thought, *Why has it become like this?*

Because Lucia and Angelene were slowly revealing a smile on their faces, this made it even more heartbreaking. Normally, smiling was a good thing. They were smiling because of the goodwill in their hearts, and not out of malice.

"…I'm sorry, but Agnese most likely won't be coming along."

After Kamijou said this, Lucia and Angelene froze.

The emotions that they had been showing up till now was dead.

It was like a sprout, that had emerged from the ground with much difficulty, suddenly being trampled on.

"Wh…why?"

The first one to speak up was Angelene.

"But didn't you meet up with Sister Agnese? She requested you to save us, right? O…erm, where did Sister Agnese go?"

Though Lucia didn't say anything, she was staring at Kamijou with probing eyes as well.

“Agnese…”

Kamijou decided to get straight to the point.

“…She said that to help you, she has to cause a distraction. Right now, the ones in most danger are you two. If someone is to be rescued, it’ll be you two. This … ‘Queen’s Fleet’ … right? She went straight to the flagship.”

“What…she went to the flagship?”

Unexpectedly, the one making this shocked reply was Lucia.

Either out of anger or anxiety, her white face was now paler.

“QUIT JOKING AROUND!!! WHY DO YOU THINK WE RATHER RISK OUR LIVES AND THINK OF A WAY TO ESCAPE FROM PRISON? IT’S TO PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING! IF YOU’RE SAYING WHO’S IN THE MOST DANGEROUS SITUATION, OF COURSE IT’S SISTER AGNESE!!”

“Wait…”

Kamijou thought of something.

He felt that there was a misunderstanding between him and the two nuns, as both of them looked a lot different from before.

Again, Angelene looked like she was about to cry.

“Don’t you know what this… this ‘Queen’s Fleet’ is?”

“This is…isn’t it to monitor the fleets around the Adriatic Sea?”

“But Agnese did say that this is an excuse to outsiders.”

Orsola frowned, and said,

“…I heard that it’s a labor facility to imprison people who did something disadvantageous to the Roman Catholic Church…”

“How is it possible?”

Lucia seemed to be gasping for breath as she said,

"…The 'Queen's Fleet' is an escort fleet meant to protect a large scale magic and ritual center called the 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea', the same name as that of the flagship. We're tasked with manual labor in order to do the preparations. If it was just for surveillance and manual labor, there wouldn't be a need for such a large facility, right?"

"The Adriatic Sea…?"

Kamijou repeated this again.

Indeed, when he had met up with Agnese, it seemed like she did say this.

"This… what the heck. You're saying that this gigantic fleet is just the prelude to that whatever Adriatic Sea? What kind of magic is this ship going to do?"

"We don't know…only the supervisors know the details—the Roman Catholic officials who were assigned to the 'Queen's Fleet'."

"We…we know that the large scale spell 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea' will be activated on the flagship, and the key to activating is another spell called the 'Rosary of the Appointed Time'."

Angelene looked like her fingers were snapped as she said,

"A…and, the 'Rosary of the Appointed Time' requires Sister Agnese to be used."

Hearing this, Kamijou was shocked.

He was wondering whether Angelene wasn't used to speaking in Japanese, and thus he had mistaken her Japanese.

But,

"We don't know the specifics, but she's definitely required. At least her brain would definitely be damaged. In contrast to the 'additional work' that's saddled on us, the scale and methods are of a completely different level. Sister Agnese… may end up being a body with 'only' her heart beating."

Lucia’s words were certainly chilling.

A chill flowed up Kamijou’s back, straight into the middle of the brain.

Having a symbolic purpose, and under good conditions with a certain level of freedom…what did Agnese mean when she said that?

“However, if you’re the intruders, I can make use of that.”

Agnese’s words appeared in his brain.

He should have noticed it earlier.

He could finally understand the hidden meaning in those words that seemed like some random mumbling to herself.

“If it’s me alone, it’ll be hard to settle this troublesome problem, but it may be faster if I’m to make use of you.”

The troublesome thing wasn’t the alert situation. When Agnese went to look for Lucia and Angelene, if she wanted them to escape, those two definitely wouldn’t agree.

He should have noticed that earlier.

Regarding the incident involving The Book of the Law, it was definitely hard to say that what Agnese did to Kamijou and Orsola was of goodwill. But even if it was her, she had the authority to think for others.

To Lucia and Angelene, the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ was the prelude to the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’.

The key to activating this large scale spell was Agnese. If she was to escape with Lucia and Angelene, the pursuers would come after them.

“The ‘Queen’s Fleet’ has a lot of things to do.”

Indeed, Agnese did say this before.

“Only the higher ups know about the specifics.”

If this was true, when she decided to go to the flagship, had she really intended on causing a distraction? I gave up on everything just to help her comrades.

Kamijou thought, *how was she feeling that time?*

“You just said that we have to think of plan during this time… aren’t you captured as well? Then come and escape with us.”

In this critical situation, what were her feelings when she heard those words?

Also,

Even so, she had continued to hide her emotions. When she led Kamijou and Orsola to Lucia and Angelene, what was she feeling?

“Is this an appropriate line for a man who challenged 250 nuns?”

The feeling hidden in this casual tone.

Understanding the wish that Agnese couldn’t say, Kamijou was at a loss as he stood around.

Beside the ear of this useless boy.

Clang!! An explosive sound of ice being blasted could be heard.

The ice wall seemed to have been broken from outside. The wall that was far away from Kamijou and company dropped like a raindrop. Like broken glass and wreckage, the remains of the ice wall flew away at a terrifying speed above Kamijou and the rest, who were lying down on the floor.

“…It hurts!?”

The reason why Kamijou would say this wasn’t because he fell down, but because a sharp pain could be felt in his ears.

“What going on now…!!”

The sound seemed like it came from afar, as if he was wearing earmuffs while listening to others.

“An…attack!? From where…!?”

Angelene said in a trembling voice. She was under the protection of Lucia, who had leaped over to save her. Lucia gave a suspicious look as well, and this wasn’t without reason, as this ship was surrounded by the same ships. Was it even possible for an attack to come from outside?

Orsola, who was lying on the floor as well, lifted her head up in realization.

“Don’t tell me…”

She was looking at the other side of the broken wall—the night scene 5 stories tall.

“…This is friendly fire from the other ships!!”

NO WAY!? Kamijou wanted to shout.

“But this is their ship, right?”

“No.”

Lucia seemed to be in pain as she said,

“The material of the fleet is seawater. As long as the Adriatic Sea doesn’t dry, no matter how dry it is, they'll have no problem in repairing and building this ship!!”

On the other side of the destroyed wall, a flash could be seen.

It was the flash of a large number of cannons being fired at them.

It was different from an ordinary cannon shot. The cannon shots flew over like small waves.

“—!?”

The sonic boom reached instantly, as if it was thunder.

Kamijou couldn't take action, the numerous cannon shots not only destroyed the room, they destroyed the entire ship. The dim glow of the cracked wall vanished,

and the tied men near the wall dropped down. Just as Kamijou wanted to extend his hand out to save them, the ice shrapnel that was created by the destruction of the cannons hit him in his temple. With this hit, the strength in his limbs was lost.

As this was a firing within the fleet, the ships around Kamijou and company were firing cannons at them without hesitation. The mast was destroyed, the cabins were destroyed, but on the outside of the destroyed wall, one could see that the other ships were freezing the seawater to repair the ship.

Except this one.

The auto-regeneration function seemed to have ceased, as the ship tilted heavily.

Grabbing the ice floor with all her might, Orsola said,

“It hurts…the cannons’ structure seem to be based on the legend of St. Barbara…”

“Eh!! That means it’s magic. Then I can use my right hand!!”

“You can’t possibly block all the cannon shots that are aimed at this ship!!”

A larger sound from an explosion could be heard, as if it was trying to block off all the other sounds. The sound of the colliding cannon shots struck like rumbling thunder. Though Kamijou was on the floor, the shockwave from below caused him to float him up. The entire ship was tilted sideways because of the continuous cannon fire. The pillar supporting the entire room seemed to have shattered.

As the vision was tilting together with the walls and floor, SWOOSH!! The sound of gravel colliding could be heard. It was the sound of things being dropped into the water.

They were sinking.

As Kamijou sensed this, the ice ship was blasted into smithereens like a small model being smashed by a hammer.

Between the lines 3

Both of her parents had been killed.

This was the reason Agnese Sanctis started to live a vagrant life, and after that, she had been through many setbacks.

For food, if she didn’t care about the texture, it wasn’t hard to get. However, it was harder to identify what could be eaten from the trash cans in the alleys behind restaurants. What was even worse was the harsh winter. Once the winter that covered the entirety of Europe struck, the cold air could become a killer weapon.

When she had been young, she stayed in Milano, a commercial city. On the overly clean streets, it was impossible to find anything that could resist the cold. In the morning, nothing was left on the several-hundred-years-old stone buildings and asphalt roads. The entire world was like a sharp and hard freezer. If she fell asleep accidentally, her fingers and ears would drop off by morning.

Even if she searched through the garbage, the ‘food’ would be hard enough to hammer nails.

In this situation, the ones who had taken in Agnese were the Roman Catholic Church.

Besides Agnese, they took in adults, children, men, women and all other kinds of people. Though the reasons were different, they didn’t seem to have fallen into some huge situation like Agnese and have lived the vagrant life. It felt like a lot of them lived normal lives, and like they were very honored to be chosen.

At that point, Agnese didn’t know that the Roman Catholic Church was a large religious sect made of 2 billion believers. Instead of grooming ordinary people, they chose people with talents, which was much more ‘direct’. Even if there was only 1 person that had talent out of 100,000, they could have at least 200 of them. This was the advantage of having more people.

There were several conditions to be selected, but she was not sure what the

conditions were.

“Wh… what will happen to us in the future?”

The one who said this was a nun called Angelene. It was said that she was from France, and was abandoned by her parents in Milano after they moved over. If she wanted to, she could have gone back, but she just bitterly laughed and noted that she didn’t know how to go back. In comparison to Agnese, she was a lot luckier. But she was considered one of those more serious cases.

“There’s no need to have any doubts. If God says that this is necessary, the believers have the duty to respond.”

The one saying these serious words was a girl called Lucia. She was a lot bigger than Agnese and Angelene, and seemed to notice that she was chosen by the Roman Catholic Church. Besides Agnese, she knew of two other girls called Agata and Catarina.

“Is that so?”

Agnese said.

She believed in the existence of God, but God wasn’t someone who would appear on call. Her parents, who were clergymen, died as they were praying. Before Agnese could ask the murderer’s name, her parents had been killed. If God was with her, this wouldn’t have happened.

“More importantly, I’m concerned with what’s for dinner.”

Because Agnese’s way of learning Japanese was rather unique, her Japanese was somewhat crude, but her Italian was rather polite.

Hearing this, Lucia said,

“What do you mean by ‘more importantly’? There’s nothing more important in this world than God—”

“Well, I’m rather mindful about it as well. We got olives to flavor our food for three days, and I’m sick of it. That Or…Or…that novice Sister called Or-whatsoever must have forgotten to use her specialty. And the bath pool, I feel

that it’s very hot. What about you, Lucia?”

“THERE’S NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE SEASONING, RIGHT!? AND I FEEL THAT THE BATH POOL IS TOO HOT!!”

“Is…is that so? Now that you mention it, the adults don’t seem to mind it… then… this means that your age… those older looking Sisters, Agata and Catarina said that it’s hot as well. Are… are… you older than them…”

Lucia glared in the direction that Angelene was pointing at. Slightly far away, the two girls frantically turned away.

Hearing the commotion, Agnese narrowed her eyes.

She didn’t believe that God was with her.

She also didn’t believe that He was a convenient tool that would save her when He heard the call.

But.

Lucia, Angelene, Agata, Catarina—to be with these people, it was all thanks to the Roman Catholic Church. Agnese thanked God with all her heart. With this thanksgiving, she decided to follow the teachings of Christianity.

Also,

If being with these people was a blessing, she wanted to protect this blessing with her own hands.

No matter what happened.

She wanted to use this chance that God had given her to prove her faith.

“What now? Why so serious?”

“Lu…Lucia. Agnese’s saying that the water in the bathroom is too scalding. I’ll go along with you to negotiate! Look, Agata and Catarina are standing up as well!!”

That was right, Agnese nodded proudly at the wrong speculation that Angelene made.

From that day onwards, this would be where she stayed.

First, she should turn this place into a comfortable place.

Chapter 4: Fireships and a Battle of Gunfire.
Lotte_di_Liberazione.

Part 1

Agnese was inside a room of the flagship of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’, the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’. This ship was a whole lot different from the other escort ships, and the room was a lot more amazing.

It was a square room.

The length was about 20 meters, and it looked like a perfect square. However, on closer look, the four walls were tilted inwards. This room wasn’t a cube, but a square-base pyramid. Looking up at the walls that gave off a white light bulb-like glow, one could see the peak that was so high above.

But there was something weird with this peak.

On first glance, it looked like it was 100 meters high. Of course, this ship wasn’t that tall. This may have been a result of magic being used to keep the space that the ship was unable to retain. Either that, or it was a form of trick art.

This wasn’t the only strange thing. This square-base pyramid was covered with equilateral triangular tiles. Basically, equilateral triangles couldn’t possibly form a square base, so there should be some other tiles to fill it up.

But no matter how one looked, there didn’t seem to be such a thing.

This as basically trying to force the introduction of a graphical theory that couldn’t possibly exist. These unique characteristics were indicating a Holy space that was unexplainable through the laws of physics.

There were no decorations inside the room.

The completely flat surface of the floor, which was caused by the reflection of white light on the ice, seemed to be showing its rejection to other people. There didn't seem to be any space for negotiations, as an invisible pressure forced in from outside.

Agnese stared at the middle of the room.

There was an iceball-like object, 7 meters in diameter, in the middle of the room, and it was unknown how it stuck onto the floor. This inexplicable object similar to a soap bubble was the 'cage' that Agnese should be staying in.

The low rumbling reached Agnese's ears.

She frowned.

"'Divine Cannon of St Barbara'…? What on earth is it firing at?"

The sound echoed throughout the four corners.

After a while,

"Don't you understand? Sister Agnese."

In this dim room, the person leaning on the ice object said.

It was the figure of a male.

He was wearing a heavy sacred robe, and the 4 necklaces on his neck looked like annual rings of a tree trunk. There were several Crosses hung on them.

Agnese thought, *that's the Menorah* (The Menorah is a symbol of Judaism, and also the emblem of the coat of arms of Israel. The reason why '7' is used is because '7' represents the number of days that God created the world, 6 days of creation + 1 day of rest, and the Menorah is shaped like a tree to symbolise the Tree of Life). This was another representation of the Sephirot (they are the 10 attributes/emanations in the Kabbalah) and the four worlds through the 7 candles.

“Bishop Biagio.”

Suddenly, a voice that didn’t belong to the duo could be heard. The voice came from the Cross on his body.

“Ship 37 was sunk. Can we stop our firing…the mainland would likely interfere if we continue. Just deploying the fleet alone is enough to cause Veneto—”

“Leave the dealings with others to my subordinates. That’s not under my jurisdiction.”

After saying that, the man named Biagio stroked the Cross on his neck with his fingers. That should be the switch for the communication thing, as the voice of the follower was cut off.

He looked at Agnese’s face, and smiled,

“I’ve been to many departments, but it’s really hard to find any competent followers.”

“If they’re incompetent followers, it should be the officer’s role to develop them.”

“That’s just idealistic thinking. And, that’s why you fail in life, Sister Agnese. You’re here because you didn’t choose your followers wisely.”

“Maybe.”

Agnese casually replied.

Biagio twisted his lips viciously,

“…I said before not to let the 37th ship near the main fleet before the intruders are found. In the end, even the ‘bridge’ got linked. What would happen if the intruders got onto the other ships? If something happened to you, we couldn’t even restore anything.”

Hearing his words, Agnese hugged her own body with her two hands.

Even so, it should be impossible to hide the fact that her nun's habit’s functions

were destroyed.

Her habit was specially made. On the design of revealing skin, there was a spell of Christian punishment on it. It was an exposed punishment—the mark of shame, meant to use shame to punish the person. No matter whether it was suicide or homicide, the counterspell would prevent the person from dying. This wasn't because someone cared and wanted the person to live; it was to add on to the misery and pain. As it would cause an extremely huge 'burden', it couldn't be used for a long time.

"However, it's really ironic."

"Don't say that, Sister Agnese."

Biagio laughed,

"It's really unexpected, that of all people, only a heretic like you is compatible with the large scale spell of the Roman Catholic Church that protects the Adriatic Sea."

The crux of the 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea' was the 'Rosary of the Appointed Time '. Agnese didn't know the details of the structure and effects, but it was said that it was only effective when Agnese's mind was crushed.

"Humans use their minds to create magical energy inside their bodies. But if the 'Rosary of the Appointed Time ' uses magical energy created by an ordinary person, it can't be fully utilized. So, Sister Agnese, it's time for you to take the stage. Please fulfill your purpose to the fullest."

These words may seem exaggerated, but the main gist was to create an 'abnormal magical energy', so they had to turn a human into one with 'an abnormal mind'—which was to turn the person into a handicap—that was all that it was. Agnese was supposedly suited for this because the way her brain 'would be destroyed' was suited for the 'Rosary of the Appointed Time '.

Though despicable, nothing could be changed even if Agnese grumbled.

She knew all about this the moment she stepped in.

"More importantly, I heard that number 37 was sunk. What's going on?"

“Are you implying that you want to know what’s going on?”

“…That management committee, which are your subordinates, they should be down there.”

“I supposed their methods should be decided by me, no?”

Agnese remained silent. She thought that before the ship was sunk, the boy and the rest should have already escaped that ship.

“If they only relied on their escape spell, it’s a bit too optimistic.”

“…What do you mean?”

“It may be faster for you once you see their corpses, but it’s too troublesome to pick up the bits and pieces that are scattered on the Adriatic Sea. In that case, it’ll be rather hard to determine who they are. What now?”

Agnese silently gnashed her teeth.

Hearing the soft sound of Agnese gnashing her teeth, Biagio smirked.

At this moment,

“Bishop Biagio, we have an emergency!!”

An urgent voice came from one of the numerous Crosses.

Biagio frowned.

“What?”

“There’s a giant construct underneath where number 37 was sunk. It seemed to be salvaging the remains…”

Biagio carelessly twisted his lips.

“An underwater spell…like what Sister Lucia did just now, is that underwater again? We may have to reorganise the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ capability in order to control the waters. You said that it’s a huge construct? If so, it’s impossible for one person to create this kind of thing alone…as expected, there’s an

‘organisation’ in Chioggia. That’s why I said to crush them. I’ve already given this order, and again, my subordinates have failed me. Really, not only did they not crush the ‘organisation’ successfully, they even let the intruders on the ship escape…”

Biagio stared at Agnese’s face.

This time, there was no smile on his face, as his eyes betrayed his anxiety.

“…Really, those guys are so useless.”

Part 2

The taste of seawater, which had flowed into Kamijou's throat, awakened his blurry consciousness.

He was in the water.

He could see his limbs drifting slightly in the water. It was unknown how deep the water was. The night sea seemed to be covered by the darkness, as even if he looked up, he could only see the dark surface of the water. The ice fleet should be nearby, but he seemed to be covered by some thick membrane, as he couldn't see the light.

White bubbles emerged from his mouth as the fragments of air continued to rise.

(Or…Orsola…where are they…?)

A certain person's name appeared in his mind.

The remains of the ice ship were gone, so the ice with the modified melting point likely melted back into water. Maybe they were already starting to create another ship somewhere else.

(Lu…cia, and An…gelene, they…)

He knew that he had to head to the surface, but his thoughts didn't follow his actions.

He couldn't link his motive, actions and results in his mind, as if he was really about to succumb to the sleep devil.

Glup.

The air bubbles escaped from his mouth, moving upwards.

(Damn…damn it…I will…really…die…)

He was not far from the surface of the sea.

It was like an illusion of looking up a cliff to see an exit there.

(…That's?)

The black sea in Kamijou’s vision was suddenly destroyed.

He thought that maybe there was a killer whale or a shark nearby, only to realize that he mistook the dimensions. The ‘thing’ that was slowly approaching from afar was about 30 meters long.

(Is that—)

Before Kamijou could consider anything.

Crack. The front tip of the long and narrow construct opened up in fours like a flower blooming.

As if it was about to swallow the boy.

Part 3

Completely wet, Kamijou was lying on a wooden floor.

The one looking down on him was Index, the rectangular suitcase and Kamijou’s luggage bag were placed on each side.

It was a long dim space. The height was about 8 meters and the length was 30 meters. The walls and ceiling weren’t rectangular, but arched like a tunnel.

It was made of old black wood, and seemed to be intricately made as if it was a wooden roller coaster.

“Don’t look so worried, he’ll wake up soon.”

A man’s voice could be heard.

“I was shocked when the entire ship got bombed without mercy. Alright, in terms of results, this is truly a miracle.”

That’s not the problem, right? Index thought.

The owner of the voice should also know this, that was why he said that on purpose.

“You see, he’s awake.”

Index quickly turned her head and stared at Kamijou, who was on the floor.

His wet eyelids opened slightly.

“Index…”

Kamijou called her name as he slowly got up from the floor.

“Touma, Are you alright?”

The one saying this was the silver-haired green-eyed girl. After seeing Kamijou’s face, she seemed rather relieved, though she quickly reverted back to her sulking expression.

The one standing beside her was—

“Ta…Tatemiya…Saiji?”

“Yo, long time no see. I’m the substitute Supreme Pontiff of the Amakusa Christian Church, and we’re now affiliated with the Anglican Church.”

His black hair was now even darker, and his fizzy afro was shining like a beetle. He was wearing a loose shirt and jeans, and was extremely tall, but his body size didn’t match his clothes size, making him look extremely skinny. There were four mini-electric fans attached together by a rope, which was hung on his neck. For some reason, his shoelaces were more than 1 meter long.

Kamijou couldn’t help but sigh.

Like Agnese and Orsola, he had met this guy during The Book of the Law incident.

“This means…it’s the Amakusa?”

They did come to Chioggia to help Orsola move house. After Index had gotten separated from Kamijou, she ran around looking for Amakusa members.

Kamijou wanted to wipe away the sweat on his forehead, but his limbs and even his pockets were drenched by seawater. Just as he was wondering what to do, someone popped up beside him to give him a white wet handkerchief.

Looking closely, the double-eyelid girl was beside him.

“Please use it.”

“Ah, thanks.”

After Kamijou received it, the girl replied ‘no problem’ before running off.

“Why are…you guys here…? And, where is this place…?”

Looking around, in the midst of the dark space, he could see and sense the presence of numerous people. Seemed like the entire Amakusa group was gathered within this wooden tunnel. They were gossiping about,

“How was it, Itsuwa?”

“You should have stayed beside him a bit longer.”

What was going on?

“Oh yeah...Eh? Where’s Orsola and the others!?”

“Anyway, we got everyone. The known identities are Orsola, Lucia and Angelene. There are also the tied-up men and some Roman Catholic nuns, and we’re currently interrogating them.”

Though he didn’t know how many people there were on the ship, Kamijou finally relaxed on hearing Tatemiya’s words. He looked around, and said,

“Is this the secret base of the Amakusa? In that situation, how did you save us when we dropped into the sea?”

Tatemiya laughed,

“It is really hard to imagine this. Let me tell you, this isn’t a construct, it’s a vehicle.”

“What?”

Before Kamijou could let out this voice, he habitually jolted, and his body swayed backwards. It was as if the facilities in the tunnel were moving. Being shocked, Kamijou froze.

“Is…is this—!?”

“I wanted to say submarine, but this isn’t so high-tech. At most, it’s just a wooden ship that has submarine capabilities.”

“In other words…”

Tatemiya lowered his voice as he said,

“It’s a ship that can float and sink.”

POW!! The sound of the water surface breaking could be heard from outside the tunnel. Kamijou’s vision was tilted according to the jerks. While he still couldn’t believe it, the tunnel shaped roof broke open from the middle. With the sound of wood clattering, it was like a set of double doors being opened.

One could see the moon that was glowing like a light bulb in the night sky.

The smell of the sea whiffed into his nose. The footing was a bit unstable as if he was on a boat.

“It may be a bit hard to understand. I suppose you can believe it now?”

Tatemiya rubbed against the wooden wall that didn’t have any weird shapes on it.

With a creaking sound, the floor that was about 30 meters long suddenly rose. The sound of gears rubbing against each other could be heard, and 40 seconds later, they were already at the ceiling. It was like a blueprint when one can see the layout from the top.

What was in front of him was the night sea.

The place which Kamijou was standing on was 30 meters long and 8 meters

wide, and it looked something like a rugby ball. The opened ceiling extended to the left and right like wings, and on the sea, there were many artificial islands made of a large amount of wood.

“Are you kidding me…”

Kamijou couldn’t help but mutter.

This definitely looked like a ship, but there was no control room, cabins or communication rooms. It was just the middle of the tunnel that was called a ‘ship’. Just this being made of wood didn’t make any common sense. It was like a cardboard prop springing to life.

“…You guys actually brought these things for moving houses?”

“What? We’re basically hidden Christians in the first place. It’s expected that we’ll hide weapons. Also, we specialize in island combat.”

Tatemiya smirked, and said,

“Paper is made from wood, and then, ships are made from wood. By using this little relationship, we can make them this small.”

Tatemiya said as he pulled out something like paper notes from his pockets. They were tied up with rubber bands. *Are they all ships?* Kamijou thought that there was some incantation written on it, but it was just plain white paper.

(Magic…it’s really exaggerating.)

Kamijou shook his head as he exhaled, turning to look at the surroundings below him.

He could barely see the land near the surface of the water. The streets of Chioggia…or maybe not. There seemed to be many more lights.

On the other hand, one could see a white light bulb-like glow on the dark sea on the other side. If one was not careful, it may be brighter than the streets of Chioggia…it should be the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. From far away, the difference in scale was even more obvious. To Kamijou, who was unfamiliar with the magic world and marine warfare basics, he was unable to tell whether this place was

safe.

Up till now, though he had stepped into the enemy's territory numerous times, no matter the place, facility or building, it was basically a piece of land.

However, this time was different. There were about a hundred of these places to fight on.

(…Agnese.)

Thinking about the face of the girl that said that she wanted to stay behind, Kamijou couldn't help but frown.

Seeing his expression like this, Index said,

"No matter what we do next, we have to confirm what's going on. I want to know how far away we are from the safety zone, how far we should retreat… more importantly, Touma looks like he has something to say."

"Nothing…"

Kamijou seemed to be a bit short of words,

"Actually, I'm not so sure about that destroyed ship. Guess maybe Lucia and Angelene are more suited to explain it."

"…"

"Wha…what now?"

"Nothing. I'm just thinking that even when we're in the enemy's territory, Touma's still Touma."

"WHAT'S WITH THAT?"

Kamijou shouted again, but the response he got was an unhappy look on her face. As Kamijou wanted to continue talking about this topic, he started to look around. By the way, where were the two people he mentioned?

At this moment, the human wall formed by the Amakusa teenagers split apart.

Lucia and Angelene walked out from behind the human wall. However, both of them looked like they wanted to run away. Orsola continued to smile as she pushed the girls' backs from behind.

"Oh, so you're alright…seems like it. In other words, we're all alive. Though the cannons didn't hit us, we did fall from a five to seven story height."

Kamijou casually converses with them, but Lucia and Angelene were both blushing as they silently turned their heads aside. *Eh?* Kamijou couldn't help but make a stiff face when he didn't get a reply.

Orsola smiled as she said to the Roman Catholic nuns,

"Really, there's no need to be shy about it."

"No…we mustn't say these kind of words so easily!!"

Gritting her teeth as she said this, Angelene swung her large sleeves as she looked like she was about to cry. Lucia didn't shout or cry, but she was closing her eyes, muttering as she drew a Cross. Maybe it was to help her stabilize her emotions.

"??????"

Unable to understand what was going on, Kamijou frowned.

"Hahaha."

Seeing this, Tatemiya laughed.

"About this…because it was dark, I'm not so sure what happened over there."

"…These words aren't exactly making me comfortable, you know."

"It's that. Lucia and Angelene's nun's habits are different from Orsola. You see, their sleeves and skirts are yellow. That's a restraining device that the Roman Catholic Church prepared. With that, they have a similar effect of 'being unable to escape a certain distance from a certain point'."

"What does that mean?"

“In, other, words, you’re a slow guy. If you don’t destroy it, those two will collapse due to the restraining effects. That would be troublesome. Thus…I don’t know how to say this, but you seemed to have accidentally used your right hand when you were unconscious.”

WHAT? Kamijou widened his eyes.

“In simpler terms, those nun's habits—”

Tatemiya twisted his lips and gave a smirk, and then pointed at Lucia’s face. To the tall nun who revealed a surprised look, the substitute Supreme Pontiff said sternly,

“Dropped off cleanly.”

With those short-sleeved arms of hers, Lucia blushed as she hugged Angelene, and looked away. She was like a mother protecting her child, using her body as a shield.

Looking closely, their nun's habits were like Index’s; there were safety pins all over the place. The gold rings on their heads were also gone.

Thinking about what might have happened, Kamijou suddenly revealed a surprised look.

“WAIT… WHEN I WAS UNCONSCIOUS, SOMETHING WONDERFUL… NO, SOMETHING RIDICULOUS HAPPENED!? BESIDES, HOW DO I DEAL WITH THIS INDEX WHO’S ANGRY UPON THINKING ABOUT THAT? I DIDN’T SEE ANYTHING AND THIS WAS ALL CAUSED BY YOU!! IT’S UNREASONABLE TO BE ANGRY OVER THIS!”

Though Kamijou was refuting this, he was in a begging position. Regarding Kamijou, who was shouting about, Index didn’t say anything, but her slightly trembling lips revealed white teeth, making it look even scarier. Killing intent enveloped her heart, and even the battle-experienced Amakusa members were frantically yelling and escaping. The entire ship was in a mess.

On the other hand, Angelene, who got away from Lucia’s chest, suddenly remembered something.

“Oh…oh yes. Now’s not the time to say this… Sister Agnese’s still…! Erm… everyone, thank you for saving us, please let us explain the situation…!”

But with that whispering voice of hers, she was completely unable to reach out to Kamijou, who was busy trying to explain himself, and the people surrounding them.

“Touma’s like this all the time!”

“Aren’t you like that as well, Index? Anyone would get angry and start lecturing, but what’s with that bite that can bite through cuttlefish floss?”

“That, about that…”

Seeing the crowd that continued to ignore her, a panicking Angelene frantically waved her hands. The entire scene was like an out-of-control class.

“Erm…about that, we still have something to do. If possible, I want to talk about Sister Agnese’s situation…wa—”

“THAT IS WEIRD! IF YOU HAVE SUCH A POWERFUL BITE ATTACK, CAN’T YOU USE THAT TO DEFEND YOURSELF AGAINST OTHER MAGICIANS!? 103,000 MAGICAL BOOKS? THIS IS EASIER TO POSE A THREAT!”

“Touma, Touma. Do you think that you can win by trying to open my eyes?”

In a rare moment, Kamijou turned around, trying to avoid Index, who leaped over. The white nun leaped onto his back, and both of them rolled on the floor. “WAAAAAAHHHH!!” The double-eyelid girl got caught in it, and fell onto the deck. The wet white handkerchiefs that she was holding onto scattered all over the place, and the surrounding Amakusa members were all shouting,

“ITSUWA, NOW’S THE CHANCE! GO!”

“USE THIS CHANCE TO KISS HIM ON THE EARLOBE!”

“AT LEAST GET ONTO HIS CHEST!”

“SO NOISY, AT LEAST YOU SHOULD GET RID OF YOUR STRONGEST

RIVAL INDEX FIRST! ITSUWA, IF YOU’RE A WOMAN, FLING HER AWAY!!!”

Seeing this scene, Tatemiya laughed while Orsola placed a hand on her face and said “Okay, okay”. Lucia, however, couldn’t stand this as she sighed.

In other words, nobody was listening to Angelene.

“That’s, that is…!!”

Angelene was getting even more panicky.

Just as her franticness was at her limit, her eyes suddenly widened.

Deciding on this, Angelene grabbed onto Lucia’s skirt with both hands—

“Look…look here! Everyone, notice this!!”

Whop, Lucia’s nun's skirt was pulled up.

At this moment,

All the conversations ceased.

At first, Lucia was shocked by this sudden silence that would have killed the ears and frowns of all the people staring at her. The emotion was high, as if the Pope was waving his hand from outside the palace. Just as she was incredulous about this silence, she felt a chill around her legs. Just as she looked down in surprise—

“!?”

2 seconds later, she blushed as if she had just exploded, and quickly used her hands to slap down her skirt that was in the air.

Lucia silently turned towards the petite nun beside her.

“…Sis…Sister Angelene?”

“No, it’s not that! Our group often gave the same feeling! So, that…I carelessly did it on habit!!”

Most likely, Angelene was trying to explain her actions. Tatemiya and Lucia, together with the Amakusa teenagers, started to blush and look away. As for Kamijou, who was frozen at the spot, he was bitten on the back of the head by Index.

Part 4

The Amakusa weren’t so stupid as to let the huge ship land near the shore. After they got near land, Tatemiya pulled out a paper bundle from his pocket and tossed it into the sea. The bundle changed into 20 mini-boats. After Kamijou and the rest got onto the boats, Tatemiya turned the ship back into paper. He didn’t keep the paper, but let it dissolve in the sea.

The rowing boat headed towards a lighted area. *Are we heading towards an island?* Kamijou thought. Looking through the darkness, it did seem to be land that appeared to point out towards the sea.

“We’re back at Chioggia. However, it’s far away from the town central where Orsola lives, it’s a place near the coast.”

It was said that this place was called Sottomarina.

After reaching the shore, the Amakusa members turned the rowing boats back into paper, and then tossed the paper bundles to form wooden tables and chairs. From the utensils that they prepared, it seemed like they wanted to discuss this while they have dinner.

The tall and elegant Lucia looked around uneasily.

“We really want to spend some time with you, but we need to get back to Sister Agnese now.”

“It’s useless even if you go now.”

Tatemiya bluntly replied,

“We’ve just gone through that situation. Now, those guys are most likely still on their guard. Let’s wait for a while for the situation to clear.”

Just like that, with the dark seaside as the background, a group of people started to prepare for this late dinner.

The ingredients couldn’t possibly be from just tossing paper. The Amakusa teenagers pulled out metal camping utensils and started to prepare their dinner quickly. Looking at their actions, Kamijou felt that there were a lot of excessive movements. Maybe they were according to the Amakusa rituals?

Angelene, who was looking at them preparing the meal, also said,

“Compared to coffee or red tea, I prefer Cioccolato con Pana.”

What is that? Kamijou stared at Angelene.

“Ah, you don’t know? It’s a hot chocolate drink with fresh cream on it. Normally, they use thick coffee, but I prefer chocolate, you know?”

Angelene started to talk about her favorite super sweet drink in delight, and Lucia, who was beside her, pressed down on her head.

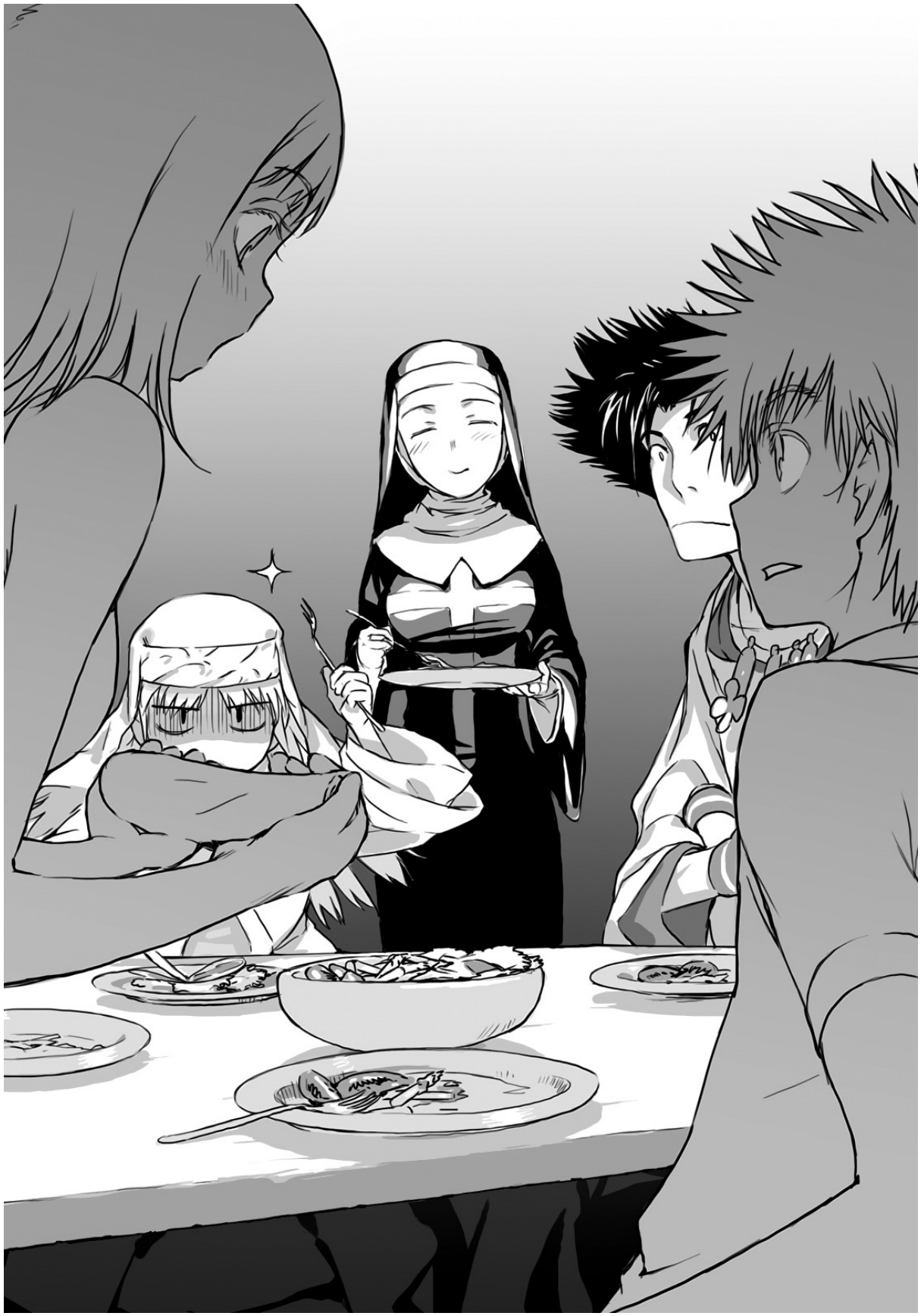
“Sister Angelene…you sure have let down your guard. They’re only assisting us temporarily. I should have reminded you several times not to be so obsessed with sweet food.”

Seeing Lucia being so angry, Kamijou was somewhat troubled.

“You don’t have to say that, right? Nuns shouldn’t be like that.”

“On what basis are you saying that? Don’t sum-up all Christians to be like Sister Angelene, who’s in training.”

Lucia shouted in an incredulous manner. Regarding this reaction, Index looked away in embarrassment. On a side note, Orsola was eating raw ham off the chopping board, even saying, “My, it sure is good.”…it sure felt that way.



Just like that, the meal was done.

On Tatemiya's call, Kamijou and company came over.

A white, wet handkerchief suddenly appeared in front of him. Looking closely, the double-eyelid girl was standing there. A hand was on her blushed cheek and her eyes started to swim about.

"Ah, thanks."

Without thinking further, Kamijou received it. The Amakusa girl said,

"No, it's my pleasure."

After that, she ran away.

"The wet handkerchief tactic again, Itsuwa?"

"Onto the next step! You must at least have the chance to hold that guy's hand!"

"This is really too slow!"

"No, no, to be unable to gain any progress is Itsuwa's charm."

"Soon, it'll be a battle against the Priestess. At that time, we'll definitely cheer for Itsuwa!!"

Hearing these words, she continued to shrink. This had been the case all this time, just what was going on? Even Kamijou was a bit mindful about being given a handkerchief.

Of course, the Amakusa members couldn't all gather at the same table. They were sitting at the other tables while facing here.

Just like that, the information processing and tactical meeting got underway.

"First, we'll start from the ship that Agnese's imprisoned on."

The first one to start speaking was Index.

“That should be the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ that’s protecting the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’.”

Straight to the point.

Lucia and Angelene stared at Index in surprise. To a certain extent, Kamijou was used to it. Seeing this scene made him remember Index’s importance.

“Protecting…? That…what on earth? That large fleet is just an accessory?”

Instead of saying that Tatemiya was in shock, it’s more like he couldn’t stand it. His expression was like seeing an upstart with too much decoration. Kamijou thought that this wasn’t without reason, as with that amount of firepower, it was already a huge threat.

“Ye…yes. Basically, we don’t know what this ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ is… I’m guessing it’s some incredible facility that even we don’t know of.”

“After we lost to you guys in The Book of the Law incident, we got reprimanded and removed from the frontlines. As we had lost our reputation, once we got back to the Roman Catholic Church, we were forced to work on the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. Even so, we only got a little bit of the orders; we don’t know what contributions we were making.”

Lucia continued on. She filled Angelene’s plate with only vegetables before handing it over to her. Though Angelene looked like she was about to cry, Lucia didn’t waver in the least.

“Being forced to work… What kind of work were you two forced to do?”

After Kamijou tilted his head and asked, Lucia and Angelene stared at each other before saying,

“We…we were assigned to draw wind from the sea.”

“What? Did you say wind??”

“Ah, it’s…not really that…even though it’s wind, it’s wind in the magic sense.”

A magic kind of wind? Kamijou widened his eyes; he didn’t understand the

difference. Thus, just as he was about to ask,

“Hm, the wind here should refer to the one used in alchemy in the beginning. Even though it’s work, it’s more of a mental thing.”

“In this scenario, it’s one of the four elements. To remove this is…”

“Maybe they’re trying to create an unstable situation.”

The members started to give opinions on this magic, and the surrounding Amakusa members nodded their heads in agreement. In the end, Kamijou missed out on the opportunity to ask the question. The knowledge of ‘the air of activity is all wind’ passed through his head, but Kamijou was rather depressed that only this thought came to mind.

“The bodies of the ships in the escort fleet use normal seawater. I guess besides that, they used some other spells as well.”

“If…if that’s the case, we can only think of the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’.”

As for Kamijou, who was left out of the conversation, he decided to get back into the topic.

“But… that thing is called the Queen of the Adriatic Sea, right? I remember I heard of this name outside of the Roman Catholics, right?”

Kamijou tilted his head as he dumped the salad with lots of octopus legs in it onto his plate. Index said to Kamijou,

“The Queen of the Adriatic Sea is another given name of Venezia.”

“Eh, if that’s so, it’s a spell that involves Venezia, right? For example, a marine spell that the Roman Catholics in Venezia use?”

“That is the case…”

Orsola wanted to put some raw ham on Angelene’s plate, but Lucia politely refused, saying that they shouldn’t spoil her.

“…Though Venezia and Rome are on the Italian peninsula, they were enemies in

the past.”

What? Kamijou frowned. Orsola continued,

“Venezia originally hated being under the dominion of other people, so after escaping into the Adriatic Sea, they built a city there. After that, they continued to maintain this strong sense of independence, even ignoring the requests of the Roman Catholic Church and the Byzantine Empire to come under them.”

Index chomped on a butter-fried clam, and said,

“In history, AD 829, some businessmen brought the remains of St. Mark, one of the Twelve Apostles (Teh_ping: For your information, he wasn’t. He was one of the Seventy, not Twelve), into Venezia, displaying the attitude of ‘wanting to protect the sleep of an Apostle’. This may be in response to the Roman Catholic Church doing the same with St. Peter.”

Hearing Index’s words, Lucia nodded,

“Because of salt and trade Venezia had a lot of wealth, she managed to hold off against the Frankish Empire and Genoa, and suppress neighboring powers such as Padova and Chioggia… After that, it became a powerful marine country near the Roman Senate; but not controlled by it”

Angelene, who was beside Lucia, placed a sliced black sea bream onto her plate, and said,

“Seeing the arrogant ways of Venezia, the Pope of that time had ordered them out of the religion numerous times. Normally speaking, this is the equivalent of a death sentence. But Venezia didn’t care, and continued to prosper…because this city-state might have bared her fangs at anytime, the Roman Catholic Church couldn’t have possibly given them such a large fleet spell. On the contrary—”

“—Was that a special large fleet meant to deal with Venezia?”

Kamijou quietly said while he stopped moving his hand holding the fork.

“Mn.”

Index replied.

“At that time, the Roman Catholic Church felt endangered, and the thing they prepared that could bury Venezia was the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’. As it was a spell designated for attacking cities, it can’t defend against incoming fleets. Thus, the defense net used to deal with the Venezian Navy was the ‘Queen’s Fleet’.”

It was a large-scale spell that could destroy a country.

Hearing this fact, compared to Kamijou and Tatemiya’s response, Lucia and Angelene were even more shocked. This was because they had confirmed what they were doing.

“…They pulled out such an old thing. What do those guys intend to do by taking this out?”

Tatemiya shook his head, looking at the light bulb-like glow on the sea far away.

Index revealed a serious expression and said,

“The large scale spell ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ could only be fired at Venezia. The reason was simple: the Roman Catholic Church feared that if the weapon was stolen by the enemy, the cannons could be turned on them…”

“Then…then, they really intend to destroy Venezia?”

Angelene turned blue with fear. This time, Orsola frowned,

“But the bad relations between the Roman Catholic Church and Venezia should have been several centuries ago, right? Right now, Venezia is a world-renowned tourist attraction, and the Roman Catholic Church should gain quite a few benefits from it. I really can’t think of a reason why they would destroy it.”

“…Maybe there’s something very significant, such that it’s beneficial to destroy Venezia.”

After Index said this, silence filled the entire place.

Kamijou swallowed his saliva, and said,

“This spell, the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ is a several hundred-years-old

thing… It's not just Orsola, I'm wondering why would they choose this time to use it."

"Hm…normally speaking, the significance of showing power to the outside is extremely big."

"But isn't the Roman Catholic Church the largest power? They didn't have to specially do this — did something happen to them recently—"

Saying this, Kamijou became silent.

After that, he said,

"…Is it because of the 'Apostle's Cross'?"

Lucia and Angelene were shocked by these unexpected words. Index, who knew about this, showed the same expression as Kamijou and Orsola. Only Tatemiya didn't know anything.

"That's the highest level spiritual item that the Roman Catholic Church is proud of. They used it during Daihaseisai with the intent of taking down Academy City, but didn't reach their goal in the end. It's not unexpected for the Roman Catholic Church to be so anxious."

Though the magic side wouldn't succumb to the science side because of this, the Roman Catholic Church must have been hit hard. If the biggest trump card of the Roman Catholic Church didn't work, what would happen with the other trump cards? It would be that kind of feeling.

"But if they were feeling anxious and took action, why did they choose to target Venezia? Basically, which idiot thought of the plan… Index, what's the benefit of mobilizing the 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea'? Can it dominate a city like the 'Apostle's Cross'?"

"No such thing. The 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea' has no value other than destruction. Basically, it has the effect of 'taking away everything of value', like the divine punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah. There shouldn't be any functions of creation."

"Sodom and Gomorrah…they're that, huh. The Archangel 'The Power of God'

sent a rain of fire on them. (Teh_ping: for more information, read Genesis 18:16 to 19:29)”

Tatemiya said as he gulped down grape wine from a wooden cup.

He continued on in a voice as if he was reading from an old book,

“Though the angel received the order to punish the immoral cities, there was a devout family there (Teh_ping: In Sodom). So only this family was told to run away before the destruction. At that moment, the angel added a rule. But on the day the cities were destroyed, the wife broke the rule, and got destroyed along with the cities (Teh_ping: She got turned into a pillar of salt)…”

“Mn, the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ was meant to launch a rain of fire down on this immoral city called Venezia, from the centre of Venezia to outside, thus everything would be destroyed. That is the first step.”

Index said in a flat tone,

“Other than that, the second phase would be targeted at anyone or anything far away from Venezia. Anyone on tour, or even an art piece in a museum, anything that displays Venetian culture: all these would be taken away. With this, everything regarding Venezia—knowledge or history—will be gone without a trace…”

A chilling topic.

Because it was hard to imagine it, one could see the large scale of it.

This had already exceeded normal imagination.

Angelene said,

“…I suppose she doesn’t know what the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ is at all. She won’t stand aside and do nothing. We attacked you in the past, so we can’t really brag about anything, but it’s hard to imagine Sister Agnese as one that would find that killing magicians or even ordinary Roman Catholics that don’t know anything to be nothing.”

“I won’t beautify her to this extent.”

Lucia continued,

“…I’m not so sure about the situation, but this should be real. From the looks of it, the Roman Catholic Church probably didn’t explain it to her, since she’s expendable. From the beginning till the end, she’s just a key, a simple tool.”

One could hear the anger in her words.

Kamijou felt that he could understand those two’s words. However, being suddenly on the sidelines, Index frowned slightly, feeling somewhat suspicious regarding those words.

Tatemiya exhaled a bit, and said,

“Basically, we have to bring Agnese Sanctis away from that place, right? I know it’s difficult without anyone saying it. But if Venezia is going to be destroyed, I can’t just sit by and do nothing.”

Hearing such real words, Lucia and Angelene couldn’t help but squirm.

“Do you know the exact time?”

“…No. But since they gathered such a large fleet, it seems like they won’t hesitate. It takes a lot of resources to maintain that, and after the sun rises, it’ll be too eye-catching. Even if they use the Opila runes, the scale is too…”

“Up…up till now, every ship has been undergoing preparations. Maybe there are only a few ships…but considering that they’re doing such a major thing, they won’t ‘wait’ for long.”

“…In other words, we can’t hesitate anymore.”

Tatemiya said in a slightly anxious voice.

“This…should be a magic problem. If so, we can only ask the Anglican Church for help, right?”

Kamijou said. Though he was not sure of the situation, Necessarius, which Index was affiliated with, should be a unit meant to handle this.

Tatemiya shook his head and said,

“We have already notified them, but there’s some distance from London. Besides, it’s not just an ordinary mage society, but famous members of the Roman Catholic Church. If the Anglican Church send their full force to stop it, it may escalate to such an extent that the world would be divided. Just being on the Roman Catholic Church territory alone—it’s hard to gather other religious groups here.”

From his words, it seemed like helping Kamijou and company was like walking on a tightrope.

Seeing this increasingly unfavorable condition, Kamijou silently gritted his teeth. But on the other hand—

(It’s not over yet. At least we can still walk on the tightrope.)

Even if they couldn’t call for a large amount of backup, if they could use this force for self-defense, it should still be a legitimate excuse.

This was why Tatemiya had sent the Amakusa to save them, and hadn’t rejected Lucia and Angelene upon seeing them.

The substitute Supreme Pontiff pushed his plate and cup on the table aside, and then shifted the huge plate full of salad near Orsola.

“Let me confirm this.”

Tatemiya sent the wooden container full of salt to the middle of the table, which was empty.

“This is the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. Right now, it’s 10km south of Venezia. There’s some distance to the mainland, and also somewhat far away from the numerous islands around. Even if we don’t use the Opila runes, there should be a blind spot that no one would notice.”

After that, he moved the container full of sauce about 30cm away.

“This is our current position, which is another 10km south. We can’t see the light of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ from here, and they can only see the night scene of Lido di

Venezia. This is a long island stretch that extends from Chioggia to Venezia."

"The casino here is extremely famous."

Angelene suddenly mentioned a little trivia ill-fitting of a nun, and got pressed down on the head by Lucia.

"And then,"

Tatemiya grabbed a wooden fork.

"This is 5km away from the 'Queen's Fleet'. From the angle and sizes of the cannons, this seems to be the enemy's defense perimeter. We'll be bombed continuously if we enter this perimeter."

Tatemiya drew a circle on the wooden table. With the salt bottle at the middle, he just managed to maintain a distance from the sauce bottle, as if he was drawing an array.

"So basically, they can't fire at the furthermost places. So if I'm to make a guess, the attack range is about 4 to 5km."

Tatemiya drew another circle on the inside as if it was an age ring.

After that, he used the fork to gently knock around, indicating a 5km perimeter.

"Basically, we have to get close to this distance if we want to get inside the 'Queen's Fleet'. If it's this ship, we'll probably get sunk if we're hit. There are about 100 ships, and just one ship alone has about 30 to 40 cannons. Can all the ships fire in such a confined space…however, to be clear, the cannon fire should come over like rain."

Tatemiya drew a straight line from the salt bottle to the sauce bottle, and then carved out the inside of the firing range.

"Here's the problem: how can we avoid the cannon fire and attack here?"

"Even if we charge in, we have to fight with a large number of enemies on the ships."

Tatemiya continued.

It was unknown who swallowed saliva.

There was a term called ‘barrage’, which was a wall formed by cannon fire. What he was asking was a theoretical question of how they should break through this thick wall that didn’t have a crack in it.

“5 km…it’s about a 3 minute ride on a train, right?”

“…You really like to use real-life examples for comparison, huh?”

Tatemiya said in an irritated tone,

“5km on land is different from 5km in the sea. If a navy ship’s engine is installed on a car, the car may end up flying—no, maybe the car body would be crushed by the weight.”

This thing called a ship, it felt slower than a car or a plane, but it was due to water resistance slowing it. Though the direct distance was 5km, it felt a lot more. How could they avoid the cannon fire and rush in when the distance was being pulled apart?

The more one listened, the more disheartening it was.

These words made them lose their appetite.

“What if…we sneak in through the sea like just now?”

Orsola fearfully came up with a suggestion.

“…That…about that, we did use the underwater passageway to escape the prison, but because of it,”

Lucia cut off Angelene and continued,

“The commander of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ isn’t so stupid as to let us use the same trick a third time. The commander of the fleet is Biagio Busoni, and though his rank is that of a Bishop, he’s a man whose cunning exceeds even that of the Pope. I suppose he would have re-established an anti-sea function for underwater

combat.”

Biagio Busoni.

“Compared to a single fighting strength, this Bishop is one that specializes in using multiple forces. However, he’s not one who relies on his guards. To be able to create a perfect defensive line, it shows that he can sense the enemy’s presence even through his skin. The position of Bishop isn’t given so easily.”

“??? How great is a Bishop?”

“To…to be able to mobilize a thousand nuns like us, that’s a Bishop.”

Angelene wasn’t mocking herself, but saying this in an ordinary tone.

Tatemiya’s mouth widened.

“So if there aren’t that many people here, would that be the silver lining in the cloud? However, coming back, the problem is the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ battle utility. As it’s made of ice, it can resupply without going to a naval base, right? Such a troublesome opponent.”

A sect that turned paper into a ship had no right to say this, but a fact was still a fact.

That was originally a large fleet meant to fight against the Venetian Navy. It would be a mistake to think that a ship or maybe one or two submarines could fight it.

Lucia and Angelene gritted their teeth unhappily.

Being far away from the center and hearing this kind of analysis from an outsider made them realize their current situation again.

“Even so…we still have to go.”

Lucia said in a determined manner.

“Oi, oi.”

Said Tatemiya scratching his head.

“I never said that you need to come along. It would be too shameless for us to borrow your boat. We have a spell to create a passageway underwater, so we can use that to enter.”

“It’s…it’s not like we don’t have a single chance of winning…”

Angelene said softly.

Her eyes were clearly showing fear and her shoulders were trembling. Even so, she still wouldn’t sit by and do nothing.

“If the underwater passageway we make can open out like tree branches… maybe we can stop the fleet, or maybe we can aim it at a reef to cause a hole in the ship…”

“That cannon can sink our ship in one hit, and even if the ice ship is hit by numerous allies’ fire, it will continue to rebuild itself. I don’t think that can be stopped by destroying it, you know?”

Tatemiya interrupted them.

Lucia and Angelene became silent.

In this silence, both of them continued to try and suppress their breathing, which entered Kamijou’s ears like waves.

“…Then, what do you want us to do?”

Lucia finally said something.

She gritted her teeth and said,

“Nobody would hope for Venezia to be destroyed. If we don’t do something, because of Biagio’s ridiculous commanding, Sister Agnese will be destroyed by this thing, this ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ and become a paralyzed cripple! Do you expect us to sit by and do nothing?”

She closed her eyes, and continued,

“Why do you think we would willingly follow her? Sister Agnese is a devout

nun that can make me shiver with just her worshiping. The treasure that the Church should have isn't money or riches, but a devout believer. I won't let someone I recognize meet such a terrible fate…no matter what."

"I…I'm not like Sister Lucia, who acts on belief."

Angelene revealed a smile, and continued.

She didn't want recognition, but just wanted to express her opinion.

"Everyone has their own reason. In the past, Sister Agnese took good care of me. Though it's not like those 1 or 2 major events, I kept getting helped by her. Thus I don't want to say goodbye to Sister Agnese without repaying her completely. If I want to repay her, now's the time."

"…"

Kamijou remained silent for a while.

No, it was more like he couldn't say anything. Lucia and Angelene's words didn't have any force in them. Instead, there was a little resistance inside this subject that was impossible to reject.

But, just because of this,

"Tatemiya, that's enough."

What? Tatemiya frowned on hearing Kamijou's words.

Kamijou continued,

"Forget about chances, tactics, practical problems, getting near 5km and being done if we're hit by a cannon. It's not that. Right now, we should be discussing on how to help Agnese. Isn't this the only problem?"

Lucia and Angelene stared at Kamijou with a surprised look.

Hearing Kamijou's words, Index lowered her shoulders and let out a whole-hearted tired sigh, and Orsola gently patted her on the back as if she was trying to comfort Index. This was probably because they both knew about this side of

Kamijou. Actually, they had seen it first-hand before.

“Tatemiya.”

Calling this name, it meant that he was talking to the representative of the Amakusa.

Maybe they all sensed this, as not just him, but the teenagers of the Amakusa were all staring at Kamijou.

“Agnese Sanctis isn’t a perfectly friendly person. But these people purposely gave up their chance of being saved in order to save their comrade. And she doesn’t even know what kind of thing the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ is, which she’ll be used for as a sacrifice. That person’s kind intentions will end up with her being destroyed after she’s used; she’ll end up as a cripple. Basically, just save her. This can also prevent Venezia from getting destroyed. Shouldn’t we do that?”

Kamijou didn’t look around.

He was just staring at Tatemiya as he continued,

“You don’t want to save her? Fine, then I’ll go.”

Tatemiya laughed.

“THONG!” He stabbed the wooden fork into the table.

“Really, you’re treating me like a bad guy…”

Tatemiya unhappily slackened his jaw,

“Damn it, I’m really sad. I don’t mean that. To me, the problem has already been settled right from the start, which is why I’m asking what’s next. If we want to do it, we have to think of a plausible way.”

Tatemiya shook his head as he said in an impatient tone,

“As for the strategy, I’ve already thought of it.”

Hearing his words everyone, including Kamijou, was silent with shock.

“After I announce the plan and we execute it, whether it results victory or defeat, it’ll be all on me. Even if we fail, we can’t grumble. Actually, I should say that it’s too late, which is why I’m asking if you guys are ready for this. I didn’t expect to be misunderstood.”

Tatemiya revealed a thoroughly disappointed look. He proceeded to look around, away from Kamijou.

In front of him were his comrades, teenagers that were like treasure.

The substitute Supreme Pontiff said to them,

“Anyway, I want to say this. Everyone must come back alive. Don’t die because of this kind of thing, or think that you have to fulfill your beliefs even if you have to die. Anyone who thinks like this, get off the ship. No negotiations. After we head off to the battlefield, we must all come back alive, got it?”

No disagreements.

This silent agreement meant that everyone agreed.

Like a teacher asking a stupid student, Tatemiya silently asked,

“What did we learn from the Priestess?”

The Amakusa members said in unison,

“TO REACH OUT TO ALL THE ABANDONED!!”

Part 5

The ship carrying the Amakusa, Kamijou and company moved north in the Adriatic Sea.

They were heading to the ‘Queen’s Fleet’.

They were standing on the deck of a ship that was floating on the surface of the water.

Tatemiya's weapon was called the Flamberge. It was a sword that was 180cm long. The wave-like shapes on both sides of the sword were said to have the effect of making wounds bigger. This sword was different from an ordinary sword, as it wasn't made of metal. It was unknown what material it was made from for it to be white in color.

"This sword is more suited for rough combat…never mind, we can only adapt to the changes."

Tatemiya stabbed the giant sword into the floor as he muttered to himself. Because the suitability of use was different from the situation, one had to change weapons sometimes. To Kamijou, who only relied on a fist, this was something he could not imagine.

Lucia was holding a large wooden carriage wheel in her hand. This heavy object was made from the Amakusa paper bundle.

"I can sense a unique 'smell'…"

She was holding onto the wheel, slowly spinning it about, touching the wheel to feel it.

"…This will do. I should be able to use the attack spell based on St. Catherine's 'Wheel Legend'."

In Kamijou's memory, she specialized in destroying a large wheel, and used the rain of shrapnel to attack the enemy.

On the other hand, Angelene placed some gold or silver coins into coin bags. She specialized in letting blunt weapons fly about, using them as a weapon to fight with the enemy.

"Ah…I can still put in some of them. But it'll hurt if I put in too many…then… then maybe a bit less…"

Hearing her being preoccupied with stuffing the coins inside the coin bags, and taking them out, Lucia looked panicky as she got closer.

“Sister Angelene, what are you fussing about with your weapons!? FILL THEM UP, YOU HEAR ME? FILL THEM UP!!”

“WAH! Won’t it hurt if we hit them, then?”

“Even if we want to communicate, we have to create a suitable environment for it. If we could have talked it out without fighting, then we wouldn’t need to work so hard for it!”

From afar, Kamijou stared at the two nuns chattering about. As if he couldn’t stand them, he said,

“Seems like…I misunderstood the Roman Catholics.”

“Though they’re the Roman Catholics, there are all sorts of people in it…isn’t that right?”

Orsola, who was standing beside him, silently said.

“It’s not about eliminating who’s bad; everyone has their own characteristics. You have a bad impression of the Roman Catholics, and actually, I also had…I didn’t believe in my Amakusa friends in the past, thus I caused quite a lot of trouble for everyone.”

“Is that so?”

Kamijou thought.

“I really can’t associate you with bad people.”

“About this…actually, women have a lot of sides to them.”

After Orsola said these somewhat sensational words, she revealed a smile. No matter whether because of her clothing or her speech, this nun didn’t know it herself, yet they emphasized a lot more of the feminism that she was born with.

At this moment, Index suddenly popped in-between them.

She was holding onto a staff.

“Here, take it. The Amakusa people lent it to me, but I can’t use a spiritual item

that requires the processing of magical energy. You might be more suited to take it."

"Oh my."

Orsola received the staff. It was made of silver.

On the tip of the staff, there was a little squatting angel there. There were six wings on the angel, surrounding it like a cage.

It was the weapon that Agnese used before. The Amakusa had detained the 'Agnese Forces' that surrendered in The Book of the Law affair. It had possibly been confiscated then.

At this moment, Kamijou suddenly noticed Index staring intently at him.

"Wha…what now, Index?"

"…"

Index remained silent for a while.

"No, it's nothing."

"Eh? WHY ARE YOU TURNING YOUR HEAD AWAY SO UNHAPPILY!!? THOUGH IT'S TIRING WHEN YOU REACT SO VIOLENTLY BY BITING ON OTHER PEOPLE'S HEAD, THIS COMPLETELY COLD REACTION OF YOURS IS REALLY TROUBLESOME, YOU KNOW!?"

Index completely ignored Kamijou's roar as she ran away. Seeing this, Orsola sighed,

"That's because you didn't take care of her properly."

Hearing her say this, right now, Index should be eating spaghetti, happily touring around all sorts of tourist attractions, busy creating wonderful memories. She didn't expect things to become like this all of a sudden. In actual fact, the one who had been most looking forward to the trip may have been Index.

"Though you always complain that you're unlucky, you don't have the intent of

stopping, right?”

“…Like a workaholic father who’s unqualified to be a parent.”

The ship continued forward.

It felt like the white bulb-like glow of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ was a bit stronger as compared to before.

“Are you guys done? If so, let’s start.”

Tatemiya pulled out a rubber band-tied paper bundle from his jeans pocket.

Kamijou frowned.

“What do you mean by ‘let’s start’?”

“We can’t just attack the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ with this ship alone. Thus we need to increase our fighting force, like this.”

Tatemiya took off the rubber band as he said this. Shua! He tossed the paper from the ship into the sea. The large number of papers gently swayed about in the air, like confetti falling from a confetti ball, before landing on the dark surface of the sea, silently absorbing seawater.

Thomp!

The papers expanded because of water absorption and created a large number of boats. Different from the ‘Queen’s Fleet’, the slick design made one feel that it was a bit Japanese–styled. Each ship was about 30m long and 7m wide. As for height, they were about 20m. However, compared to the 100m ships of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’, they seemed a lot weaker.

There weren’t just one or two ships; there were tens of ships that appeared. The expanded ships suddenly appeared, squeezing against each other. The fleet of ships squeezed against the one that Kamijou was on, and the hull started to shake.

In surprise, Kamijou stared at the scene in front of him,

“…Isn’t this a large fleet as well? If so, it’ll be one heck of a battle. Even if the enemy is the ‘Queen’s Fleet’, we can fight them head on, can’t we?”

“You’re overestimating us, aren’t you? Look closely, this is a fleet completely different from the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. There aren’t any cannons on them.”

“…?”

Hearing him say this, there weren’t any cannons on the ships. The walls and decorations on the ships’ hulls would be considered slim, and they didn’t seem able to withstand damage. If so, were these just ordinary ships?

“Then why did you prepare these?”

“You don’t really need to use a navy ship for marine combat. The Amakusa is a secular sect that hides itself in the local culture. Of course, we learned some English history.”

Tatemiya smirked,

“Do you know how the English Navy beat the so-called invincible Spanish Navy in the past?”

Part 6

Ship number 43 of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ was an intelligence ship that specialized in scouting for enemies.

The nun stationed there, Sister Agata, exhaled as she stood at the front end of the deck. There were small tables placed on both ends of the ship, and there were ice-made documents on them. The thin ice boards imitated ancient goatskin parchments, and contained all sorts of information, like maps, sea charts, and ship information.

On one of them,

An alarm sounded from the ice document that showed a sea chart of the nearby areas of the Adriatic Sea. Below the indicators of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ that looked like International Chess pieces, there were many more new chess pieces that were quickly approaching the fleet.

“BISHOP BIAGIO!!”

“I see it. Give me the details.”

After the nun shouted, a voice reverberated through the air in response.

“Ships coming in from the south coast of Venezia on the Adriatic Sea, about 30 to 40! Speed…extremely fast! 50 seconds till they reach our fleet!!”

The distance from her to where the ships appeared was about 5km; the speed was about 360km per hour. However, there was a basic difference between land speed and sea speed, because the resistance of air and sea were different.

Basically, this speed was impossible.

Even for a speedboat made by the science side, the maximum was only 90km per hour.

To reach 360km per hour, a lot of horsepower was required. If the force wasn’t appropriate, the ship might end up being ripped by the sea. But this ‘enemy’ had done the impossible.

“Can we sink it?”

“The ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ has deployed ship numbers 25 to 38; they’re at a position where they can hit them with the cannons. Before those ships hit us, if we can switch the positions of the ships, it will prevent the enemy from escaping.”

“Hurry up and take action. Their target should be the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’; we can’t let them escape.”

“Roger that!!”

Agata said as she passes the command to all the ships and to aim. Two new

documents appeared on the table beside her, indicating the positioning of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ and the firing trajectory of the cannons.

They were about 4 to 5 km away from the ships.

“THEY’LL REACH OUR FLEET IN 50 SECONDS!! SINK THEM FIRST!!”

As she shouted this, the vibrations shook her eardrums.

The ‘Queen’s Fleet’ fired numerous cannons. Agata summoned some more ice documents. On the documents, there were quite a few water pillars on the night sea, indicating that ships were being sunk left and right.

But the ship figures didn’t stop. The other boats used the sinking boats as a platform to jump over the water and head forward.

(Using the front few ships as a shield…?)

Agata couldn’t help but suspect. Even so, she couldn’t tell whether there was any special armor or defensive spell. The enemy ships that were directly sunk didn’t look like they intended to dodge. Even if more than 10 ships were sunk, the enemy hadn’t done anything to avoid them.

The distance between both of them would be closed up soon.

The distance was a few hundred meters, yet the enemy hadn’t fired a single cannon.

(…Wait a second.)

Agata reexamined the enemy ships on the ice document.

She suddenly froze. The ships indicated didn’t have any cannons.

“If so…EVERYONE GET INTO DEFENSE MODE! THE ENEMY’S TARGET IS—”

Just as Agata gave the order,

The fast approaching ships weren’t stopping, the enemy ships pierced through the hulls of the outer ships of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. Not only that, the inside of the

wooden boats started to glow, and create large explosions. It was like the entire ship was a bomb.

The explosions rang in her ears.

The sea started to shake, and Agata leaned on the ship's rudder as she shouted,

"THEY'RE FIRESHIPS—UNMANNED NAVAL SHIPS THAT SELF-DESTRUCT!!"

Hearing the explosions, Tatemiya silently closed his eyes.

"Fireships were invented before torpedoes were. At first, they were just movable weapons on the sea. Normally, they're little ships that look just like boats. At first, when the English Navy fought against the invincible Navy, they sent real large ships that were filled with gunpowder to the enemy's territory."

Kamijou said in shock,

"Then, you plan to sneak in when the sea's in a mess? What a crude plan."

"Sister Agata."

"It hurts…yes…I'm here!"

Hearing one explosion after another, Agata responded to Biagio's call.

"If the enemy's aim is to prevent the 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea' from activating, I guess that the enemy won't just attack from the outside. There must be something — hurry up and search for the enemy."

Agata eyes stared at the ice documents on the table. Due to the explosions, ripples and faults formed on the sea charts and maps, so it was hard to determine.

(If the fireships aren't the real targets…they should be in another fleet. However…)

She changed the scale: 5km, 10km, 20km, she checked them all, but she didn't find any ship that matched the requirements. There were three large civilian jets; it shouldn't be one of them.

Agata intended to increase the scale, only for her hand to stop.

(…What if they're not 'on' the sea?)

The numerous ice boards disappeared. What replaced them were multiple layers of ice documents stacked on each other. The ice block that appeared on the table had the length and width of the documents. What they indicated wasn't the horizontal length and width, but the vertical depth.

In other words, it was meant to search for enemies under the sea.

"I found it! 80m South of the 'Queen's Fleet', 40m deep. One huge object is spotted—it's the ship from earlier!!"

"We've been discovered…"

Tatemiya suddenly looked up.

As if responding to his actions, the Amakusa members operating the ship were giving reports.

"We have confirmed the enemy ships' cannons. Estimated trajectory is -30 degrees. They're obviously aiming into the sea."

"There's some movement on the south side of the enemy's fleet. They seem to be making a formation against sudden attacks!"

In a cannon fight, though it was not easy to get a gauge on the enemy's situation, if they were found out, it was too late. Naval warfare wasn't like air combat, where one could move about easily. It was almost impossible to use speed to dodge or shake away from the enemy's attack.

Thus, the basis of naval warfare was to find a place to attack without being fired back at.

This tabletop combat had already started before the cannons were fired.

It was expected if the enemy didn't have any reaction, but if there was a reaction, it meant failure. This was a mind battle full of silence.

Thus,

"Numerous lasers are locked in on the ship!"

"The coordinates are responding. It's faster than we expected! If this continues…!!"

"This is the worst situation…"

Tatemiya said in a low irritated voice.

"Everyone, brace yourself!! Beware of the enemy's fire! If this ship is hit by it —"

Before he could finish, explosions covered all the noise.

"A confirmed hit on the ship! The enemy's now moving extremely slowly!!"

"Very good."

Hearing Agata's words, Biagio was somewhat relaxed.

"How can the same trick work the third time? We have prepared some underwater cannons as well."

What he prepared were cannons that when fired, would cause the surrounding seawater to freeze. With this, the ship that was surrounded by the thick layers of ice would be unable to move. As ice had buoyancy, even if they didn't do anything, the ship would float to the surface together with the ice. After that, they just needed to use ordinary cannon fire to actually destroy the enemy.

"There's sixty seconds till the ship completely floats. Let's take care of the remaining fireships in the meantime—"

"Sister Agata! We have an emergency!!"

There was a voice other than Agata's. Another nun's voice.

"The enemy's forces have gone onto ship number 29! From the weapons and the spells used, it's the Amakusa from before!!"

What!? Agata couldn't help but doubt her ears.

She turned to look at the documents on the table. An unmanned ship had collided with ship number 29…looking closely, the ship wasn't damaged. Normally, if it had self-destructed, there would be a large hole on the ship…

If so…

"They prepared a boat that they didn't intend to blow up, and the main fleet got on that boat, mixed in with the other ship…that underwater ship was actually another decoy…!?"

Kamijou Touma got off the wooden boat onto the ice ship. Following him, Index, Orsola, Lucia, Angelene, Tatemiya and the Amakusa members jumped off of the boat.

"Forget about trying to control all the ships! No matter what, we can't win on numbers! Just beat the core of the enemy!"

"Flagship…where's the 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea'?"

Kamijou looked around. Several hundred meters away, there was a ship that was a lot bigger than the other ships. However, there were more than ten ships at the middle.

"I'll make a bridge from ship to ship! Anyway, you guys just go on ahead—"

Tatemiya's voice overlapped with another.

It was an audio broadcast of a female voice.

"All personnel on number 29, 32 and 34, please retreat! If you can't make it, jump into the water! We'll remake these ships after we sink them!!"

“Damn it.”

Tatemiya cursed.

“They intend to blow up the ships again!? HURRY UP!!”

Tatemiya tossed the paper bundles around. The paper bundles immediately expanded, creating wooden arched bridges that were linked to the ice ships.

But before they could get on it, the cannon fire flew all over the place. Before the cannons struck, the impact from the vibrations alone was enough to cause Kamijou to almost tumble onto the floor.

“Ugh!?”

He didn’t even have time to open his mouth. The huge ship was being blown apart like flying dirt. The cracking ship walls sunk, creating large water pillars.

The water landed onto the deck.

The large pillar that he couldn’t grab hold of with both hands snapped on being hit by the cannon.

“INDEX!”

Index was all curled up as Kamijou grabbed her hand and ran over to the bottom of the fallen pillar. The fallen pillar fell aside, and the broken part just so happened to form a bridge linking to the next ship.

Without thinking, Kamijou jumped forward.

With Tatemiya leading, the Amakusa members got onto the ship they made, and moved onto other ships.

Kamijou grabbed Index’s hand and immediately scrambled over to the neighboring ship. Looking back, Orsola, who was holding the Lotus Wand, was moving up this pillar and onto this ship. Being hit by the second wave of cannon fire, the ice ship gradually started to tilt, and the pillar acting as a bridge was dragged into the sea.

“Touma, where’re the rest?”

Though most of the Amakusa had used the wooden bridges, one could see a few of them jumping into the sea. Kamijou couldn’t help but grit his teeth, but Orsola, who was beside him, said,

“They have spells to create bridges and ladders. Because they know they can win, they would choose to jump into the water.”

This suggestion brought him a little hope, and he could only believe in this. Besides, the deck was about 10m above the sea. Even if Kamijou reached his hand out, he couldn’t reach it.

“Damn it! Let’s go and destroy that ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’!!”

Again, Kamijou wanted to head to the flagship of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’.

At this moment, some new footsteps blocked his entry.

Several nuns were standing on the deck as if it was a stage. Like Lucia and Angelene, they had yellow sleeves and skirts to go with their black-based nun's habits. They appeared to be manual workers on this ship, and they seemed to be of Agnese’s Forces.

They should know why Kamijou and company were here, but without saying anything, they flashed their weapons, which ranged from swords, axes, staffs, to things that didn’t even look like weapons, like Bibles and torches.

There were only nuns here.

The people known as caretakers should be on the ship as well, but he couldn’t see them. Maybe they had left the fighting to the labor workers while they hid. But the tactic of blasting the ships together with the enemy wasn’t really an effective tactic.

“…You should know what’s happening to Agnese, right? DON’T YOU WANT TO HELP US!?”

Kamijou yelled, but one of the nuns shook her head.

“I’m sorry, but we can’t have any feelings in our work.”

She said, as a representative for everyone.

“Those are definitely not your true thoughts.”

Orsola said in a heavy tone,

“Maybe they themselves haven’t noticed it, but they were people who recognized Agnese’s ability and followed her. Because they believe the leader will definitely overcome these problems, they would do this. They probably wish that someone would stop them.”

“…”

Just because they couldn’t express it in words, they were calling for help in a different way. Right now, they were in a situation when they had to go against what they were thinking and destroy each other. Thinking about this, Kamijou couldn’t help but clench his fist.

As if responding to his actions, several nuns stepped forward.

The distance to the enemy human wall was about 7m.

At this moment,

Something small flew over Kamijou and the nuns’ heads.

Looking up, flying 10m in the air was a carriage wheel.

“Sister Luc—!?”

Before the enemy could shout her name.

BAM!! The wheel exploded. The large number of wooden shrapnel avoided Kamijou, Index and Orsola, following a magical trajectory as it attacked downwards. This could be considered a rain of destruction. The nuns tried to use their weapons and spells to defend themselves, but the entire group was shaken up.

After that.

“This way!!”

Looking in the direction where the shout came from, it was Lucia and Angelene, who had come onto this ship from another way. On the edge of the deck behind them, there was a bridge linking to the next ship.

“Number 41, retreat immediately!! If you can’t make it, jump into the sea!! This ship will be like the previous ones: we’ll remake this ship after we sink it!!”

The surrounding atmosphere was tense. Though Kamijou didn’t know the specific number, the enemy should be aiming here.

“HURRY UP!!”

Lucia shouted for Kamijou and company to get past the bridge. At this moment, the nuns went into action.

They were not escaping, but preventing Kamijou’s group from escaping.

Whoosh!! Numerous nuns surrounded Kamijou’s group like a single organism.

“These …IDIOTS! IF YOU’RE SO DARING, WHY WON’T YOU SAVE SISTER AGNESE!!?”

Lucia raised her hand, and the scattered pieces of wood gathered back into the shape of a wheel. After grabbing the wheel, she rushed at the nuns.

But before a battle could begin, another explosion reverberated.

“AH!?”

Kamijou shouted as his eardrums vibrated violently. With the sound of lightning, the neighboring ships were firing cannons. The cannons likely hit the hull, as the entire deck shook violently.

The second wave of attack was coming over.

This time, it seemed like they intended to directly destroy the deck, as loud cannon explosions rose up with a cracking down.

The cannons were aimed at Kamijou’s group, and the black hole looked like a

monster glaring over.

At this moment,

“Come out, one of the twelve disciples, tax collector and lowly servant of the eradicating magician!”

The one shouting was Angelene.

The four bags of gold that she had immediately responded to her call.

Red, blue, yellow, green. The four heavy bags with wings smash into the nearby pillar like a metal punch. This was to concentrate the attack at the base of the pillar to smash it. The huge pillar severely tilted.

After that,

The large number of cannons hit the falling pillar. Just like that, the ice blocking the cannons exploded and Kamijou’s group was saved by Angelene.

Because of the cannons, the pillar that had become a shield exploded into pieces on falling towards the deck.

The fragments of ice descended. Though they were fragments, each of them were larger than a refrigerator.

“!!”

Lucia raised the large wheel and immediately detonated it. The large amount of pieces of wood hit the ice fragments, but was unable to deflect all the ice pieces.

The ice pieces that hadn’t been hit flew towards the Roman Catholic nuns.

Flying towards the group of nuns who were formerly called the Agnese’s Forces.

Seeing this situation, Angelene, however, ran towards the group of enemy nuns.

“WAIT…WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?”

Lucia shouted in surprise.

Angelene ignored the surprised nun and gathered the four bags of gold. She then tried to hit the huge ice blocks that were falling.

The cloth of the bags of gold broke and the coins scattered all over the place.

As the bags had smashed the pillar a moment ago, they were at their limits.

“STAY BACK, SISTER ANGELENE!!”

Lucia shouted at Angelene, who had lost her weapon. She looked around, and could see that boy called Kamijou Touma running near Angelene. Maybe he wanted to push her aside.

However,

Angelene wasn’t backing away.

Not only did she not back away, she took a step forward. She bit her teeth and leaped toward the nearest nun. The nun, who had been rooted to the spot, flew backwards, landing on the deck.

After confirming the nun’s safety, as Angelene prepared to get down,

The ice block that was as large as a refrigerator landed beside her.

It landed forcefully on the deck and shattered into a rain of fragments that were as large as a rocks.

BOOM!!

With the blunt sound, her petite body danced in the air.

“SIS…”

Lucia screamed as if she had just seen an unbelievable thing.

“SISTER ANGELENE!!”

Seeing Lucia frantically ran towards the fallen petite nun, the surrounding nuns seemed to waver in their actions. However, they seemed to suddenly remember their stand, arming themselves again.

At this moment,

“Really, I just had to see this boring thing again.”

Tatemiya and the Amakusa members moved from another ship to this ship through a wooden bridge, forming a human wall between Angelene and the nuns.

He pulled out some paper bundles from his pocket and tossed a bundle to Lucia.

“This is an escape submerging ship. Though it isn’t the best facility, it beats staying in enemy territory. Don’t just use one. Scatter them among the fireships to confuse the search, the chances of you being hit will decrease a lot!!”

Lucia ran over and put the paper bundle into her sleeve. Though Tatemiya said this, the Agnese’s Force's fighting and mental capabilities meant that they weren’t going let her use the paper bundles so easily. Even if she created a ship out of panic, the concentrated fire would sink the ship.

But there was no time to care about all these now.

Lucia inclined herself over in front of Angelene. Seeing Lucia grab her hand that had gone limp, Angelene smiled,

“…Sister Lucia…your…hand…is…trembling.”

“OF COURSE!!”

“Really…hate…it. I…can’t…die…here…”

Angelene pronounced each word as she said,

“…Didn’t…I…say…that…we’ll…go…back…with…everyone? Sister… Agnese… us…and the…people…fighting…over…there…the true…meaning… of…every…one.”

The neighboring cannons made noise as they took aim.

The third wave of attack was prepared.

Even so, Lucia didn’t look away from Angelene.

“So…I…definitely…can’t die. If…you…can…promise…me…this… I…will…fulfill…it…to…the end. So, I…beg…you. Sister…Lucia. Don’t…differen…tiate…what…enemies…and…comrades. Can…you…simply…fight…together…to protect…everyone…?”

Lucia silently gritted her teeth.

The neighboring escort ship fired, the cannon shot aimed at her.

But Lucia’s body was not blown to bits.

A right hand blocked this extremely powerful cannon shot.

The seemingly ordinary boy reached his right hand over, as if he wanted to block this ice shot that was shot through magic, before using the strength of his five fingers to crush it.

“HURRY UP AND PROMISE HER, LUCIA!!”

He said,

“IF YOU CAN HELP HER, NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF NONSENSICAL ILLUSION IT IS, I’LL SMASH IT!! SO PROMISE HER! SAY SOMETHING! MAKE HER FEEL PRIVILEGED TO BE HERE! GIVE HER SOMETHING TO BELIEVE THAT IT’S WORTH WORKING SO HARD!!”

“Alright.”

Lucia said.

She stared at Angelene’s face, and silently said,

“I’ll protect everyone. So you…have to fight on.”

Hearing her voice, the petite nun revealed a smile.

The ice ship being hit by the cannons shook about violently. With Kamijou’s right hand, it was impossible to block all these shots. It was not safe here. In fact, nowhere was safe.

Lucia carried Angelene, who was on the floor, with both hands and stood up.

Now she couldn’t use her wheel, but she didn’t seem to mind. Right now, she had only one thing on her mind, and that was to fight together even with the disadvantages.

In order to chase after Lucia, the nuns again stepped forward.

At this moment, the Amakusa and Kamijou’s group formed a wall, blocking them.

They were both staring at the same place.

Past a few ships, the flagship ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’.

Between the lines 4

(I…still…)

In this situation when her consciousness was still blurry, Angelene, who was being carried by Lucia, thought.

(Can’t…give…up.)

An explosion reached her ears, with the sound of swords and axes clashing, but Angelene still thought this way.

(Sister Agnese, for the Church, she worked really hard. The rewards that she got for doing dangerous missions, she used them to print Bibles. And then she visited old and worn down Churches and gave the Bibles to the priests, telling them that she hopes to do her utmost…)

The pain from being hit by the ice blocks spread around her body without stopping.

The scattered fragments of the pillar had hit her temples, concussing her brain.

(Even when Sister Lucia isn’t working, she’ll climb up the Bell Tower to warn

everyone immediately in case something abnormal happens. She continued to stay there, and right now, the Bell Tower almost seems to be where she's staying at…)

Tears started to drip, one by one.

It was not because of pain, but because she was not satisfied.

(Even if it's others, everyone…definitely…has a virtue. Among us, definitely, no one…is a real…bad person. Why…did it become…like this? I hate bad people. I had enough…of the battle of the balance between good and evil.)

Shaking her limp limbs, she thought.

Sister Angelene just continued to pray.

(Save…)

She bit her teeth.

Tears flowed out of her eyes.

(Someone save them…save me…and my precious comrades. Save them from… this nonsensical…darkness…)

Chapter 5: Queen of the Adriatic Sea.
La_Regina_del_Mare_Adriático.

Part 1

“It’s going to be over soon.”

From the bottom of the ship, Biagio Busoni looked up at the ceiling.

“This work is about to be over. Really, to work so much just to destroy a city. ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’…before the end, I’d like to reexamine this place from an antique point of view, and not on practicality.”

On first glance, the room was a 20m side perfect square. But on closer look, the four walls were tilted inwards. It wasn’t a cube, but a pyramid.

Looking up at the walls which gave off a white light, one could see the tip high up in the ceiling. Though the depth from the sea to the deck was only 20m, the ceiling looked like it was over 100m.

“…Humph, hasn’t it quietened down?”

As if responding to his voice, the flagship ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ trembled slightly. The tremor didn’t just occur once, but occurred once every few seconds. The surrounding escort ships were being destroyed like animals killing each other, getting hit by friendly fire. But the cannons continued to fire, which meant that the enemy continued to cross the ships. Even in the deepest part of the flagship, which was surrounded by thick layers of ice, the explosions continued to ring.

Here was the problem.

The male caretakers of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ were different from the nuns in the Agnese’s Forces: they were not suited for combat. It was not because they were not suited for it, but because of their job scope. No commander would hold a weapon and stand on the frontlines, so because of this, there were only some supervisors.

Up till now, though it was still in acceptable limits, what made it a bit harder was that the nuns, who were used to working with their hands and feet, weren’t used to ship-to-ship combat. They had only come here on the premise of being laborers, and they had never been trained on the ships. For things to turn out this way was to be expected…

(That’s why I requested for a special force different from the supervisors…and yet this request was…)

The higher ups only focused on the capability of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’, and made such a judgment, “No need for more troops; there won’t be any problems with this fleet”. They didn’t consider everything completely, and may have caused this battle situation to change.

(…The higher ups are as useless as the subordinates, huh? Trash.)

Biagio glanced aside.

“So exciting. The barricade surrounding you, isn’t it not so thorough?”

“…”

The one being asked this was a girl in the same room.

There was an iceball-like structure that was 7m in diameter in the middle of the room. Though the middle was like a soap bubble, when the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ activated, the inside would be filled with ice. This was to freeze the nun who was suitable for the task, and destroy it magically together with the ball. This nun was now leaning on the outer curved surface of the ball.

Her name was Agnese Sanctis.

This nun was wearing a torn and tattered nun's habit that was somewhat revealing.

She didn’t answer Biagio.

Or was she unable to answer? From her expression, one could tell that she was wondering why there was a need for wars, who were they doing this for, and for what reason? She completely didn’t care about what was happening outside.

“It’s this expression.”

Biagio continued.

The four necklaces and the numerous Crosses on him made some sounds.

“So irritating. So far, you’ve been making a shameless expression as if you’re waiting for others, as if you’re standing in the light. You have no right to make that expression. You’re a sinner, and yet you look like you’re enlightened; that look infuriates me. Animals only need to crawl on the floor — only humans have the right to adjust their appearance.”

He said with a smirk and a tinge of malice in his cruel words.

Agnese glared at Biagio’s face.

“…Then let’s hear it: what do you think I’m hoping for?”

“I don’t have to ask that question for you to know, so I’m not going to ask it. Humph, I was really angry when those guys came in. Since you’re making that look, I’ll beat them up in front of you.”

Agnese turned her body away in disgust.

Biagio saw her reaction with delight and said,

“I’m going to crush that hope of yours, because parts have no need for any feelings.”

Part 2

There were about 50 of the Amakusa members.

In contrast, on the Roman Catholic side, there were a total of 250 nuns. Normally speaking, in terms of numbers, they would lose. But this was a ship, and not all of them were gathered at the same place. Besides, the basics of ship combat were different from land combat. In order to pull the distance closer, the Amakusa concentrated their fire on close distance. Even in this chaotic situation, they could still move about nimbly. In contrast, the Roman Catholics, who outnumbered the Amakusa, were obstructed by their comrades and their weapons. The Amakusa knew how to fight back with less people. This was the force of these few Amakusa members, the techniques they had learned to fight against many enemies.

Coincidentally, it had been the same during The Book of the Law incident.

There was only one thing that was different.

Was Agnese Sanctis the one they should be protecting? Or was she the one they should be beating?

“Hurry up and go! No matter what, we must save that kid! We’ll delay the main fighting force here!!”

Being prompted by Tatemiya, Kamijou ran on.

Three more ships and they could get closer to the flagship.

While the Amakusa continued to delay the nuns, Kamijou, together with Index and Orsola, headed off from one ship to another. Of the trio, only Orsola could use the wooden bridge spell. She carefully read the spell, even more so than ordinary magicians, and released the bundles of paper one after another.

The flagship ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ was right in front of their eyes.

The mastermind that was being protected by all the escort ships, imprisoning Agnese Sanctis, and wielding the large-scale magic facility that could destroy Venezia in one shot. If that was the command point, Biagio Busoni, who hadn’t appeared, should be there as well.

“Let’s go, Index, Orsola!!”

Kamijou shouted as he ran past the wooden bridge and stepped onto the ship.

It was a huge deck.

In the middle of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’, where the ships could easily be over 100m in length, this ship was easily twice the size of the other ships. The ice walls were a lot more glamorous than the other ships; the entire ship looked like white gold basking under the moonlight. In terms of decorations, if it could be said that the other ships were heavily focused on military functions, then this ship was more like a magnificent palace. Even the door handles and pillars had an artistic sense to them, and on the edge of the ship, there were figures of angels and the Virgin Mary. Though Kamijou didn’t head off to the front end of the ship, the thing placed there should be some grand artistic item.

“Seems like…no one’s around…”

Orsola held onto the Lotus Wand as she looked around.

“This ship feels like it’s imitating the Doge, which is when the governor steps on the ship. It’s a ship that’s used during the National festival of ‘Marriage to the Sea’.”[5]

“Just like a magic ship. This ship controls all the ship functions of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. It continues to make ice decorations and setups. It’s also a ship that controls and deploys the other ships.”

Hearing Index say this, Kamijou carefully looked around.

“So the nuns won’t be here and the cannons won’t aim here? This ship looks like it can’t be easily repaired by using seawater. If it could, there would be no need for so many escort ships around.”

In order to enter the ship, Index reached her hand out to the nearest door, but even with this, the door wouldn’t open. Looking closely, the keyholes of the doors and the walls were all stuffed with ice. This was basically just like part of the wall.

“Wait a moment; I’ll remove the magic lock…”

Her words were interrupted.

Kamijou steps forward.

“…No need to be so polite. I feel that it’s already too troublesome to worry about all these!!”

With this irritated cry, Kamijou clenched his fist and smashed it into the middle of the door.

BAM!!

The door and even the surrounding wall were blown away. Where Kamijou had punched, there was a 3m square hole in the wall.

“Really amazing.”

“That’s because this is different from the escort ships; there’s magic on even the walls and floors.”

The lock and even the other constructs were destroyed as well.

The crumbled entrance revealed an inside similar in appearance to the outside of the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’, like an interior cruise pathway. But the space 3m inside was also cut, eradicated cleanly. Seemed like the hit just now hadn’t just been limited to a square, but a cube. There’s even only half of an Angel-figure wall light.

“This is a block structure.”

Index explained clearly,

“This removes the bare minimum required to minimise the damage. So even if it’s Touma’s right hand, it can’t destroy everything in one go.”

On an escort ship, even if he touched the ship, this wouldn’t happen. Kamijou thought that with this, their explanation of the flagship continually changing shapes and using this to control the ships should be correct.

But he had no time to ask his question.

“BAM!!”

The ice blocks rose up from below the deck, surrounding the group from left, right, and behind. The ice blocks immediately adjusted themselves, removing the unnecessary parts, transforming into 3m tall Western golems.

And it was not just one or two.

20 to 30 of these ice sculptures surrounded Kamijou's group instantly.

"Inside!"

Orsola shouted,

"They should be here to protect the ship, this should prevent them from destroying the inside!!"

Before Orsola could finish speaking, Index had already grabbed onto Kamijou's hand as she ran off. Kamijou originally intended to use his right hand, and because of this unexpected situation, lost his balance as he ran off.

The numerous Western golems started to move their swords and axes, which were made of the same material.

With the sound of a WHOOSH!, the air was cut.

BOOM!! With a terrifying sound, numerous slashes collided with each other. The strikes grazed Index's swaying hair, nearly pierced Kamijou's face, and missed the top of Orsola's head, who was ducking down as she ran. Kamijou was so terrified that his breathing nearly stopped, but his feet wouldn't stop because of this.

Before the next wave of attacks, the trio rolled into the damaged hole and into the ship.

The interior design was exquisite as the outside — seemed like they had spent a lot of effort to make them. Angel statues lay left and right, and the lights on the walls continued to change their shape slowly. Forget about a handle, one could even feel the painstaking effort that the artisan and the artist had put into even a small screw. However, there wasn't really any need for a screw on an ice ship.

"This…"

Orsola, who was sitting on the floor, barely managed to open her mouth before the large number of golems rushed inside.

“DAMN IT!!”

Kamijou got up from the floor and pulled Orsola and Index, who was lifelessly lying on the floor, by their hands. It was more like swinging them inside though, instead of pulling.

Blunt sounds could be heard.

The numerous golems entered the entrance and were stuck there. These golems couldn’t move, so spikes appeared on their chest and abdomen, breaking those ice sculptures. The new golems stepped on the ice sculptures and into the passageway. Like a storm blowing, the huge golems reached where Kamijou’s group was.

“THEY’RE…CHASING US…!?”

Index shouted, and Kamijou could already guess the priority of the ice golems.

(…Looks like they want to destroy my right hand, huh?)

The entrance and wall were only destroyed once, at the same time. Even if they didn’t know the reason, the enemy should be able to guess the threat that the Imagine Breaker brought.

(If that’s the case…!)

Just as Kamijou reached the intersection of the paths, he clenched his right hand.

“INDEX, ORSOLA! MOVE AHEAD FIRST!!”

He pushed the two girls into the side path, and ran to the furthermost place.

“TOUMA!!”

Before Index could take the next action, the numerous golems chased after Kamijou, and some of them chased after Orsola’s group.

“WOOOOHHH!!”

As Kamijou pretended to use his right fist to destroy the wall, the golems immediately turned to the boy. All the ice security guards raised their weapons and chased after Kamijou.

Part 3

“Sister Angelene, are you alright?”

Lucia said as she gathered the broken pieces of the exploded wooden wheel to her hand and headed off in the opposite direction.

“…Mn.”

Angelene leaned on the ice pillar. As her bags had torn, she used her nun's cap and stuffed it with coins, wanting to fight on.

Normally, she would be unable to fight. Even on a real battlefield, she should retreat to the back. Even though Lucia got the escape ship spell from the leader of the Amakusa, the nuns wouldn’t allow them to use it. Lucia was unable to carry the injured Angelene in order to get away from them.

Lucia placed the large wheel in front of her to scare the enemy.

Seeing her do this, the enemy’s barricade backed away slightly. There were about 30 nuns, and considering that they were facing just one enemy, this may have been the most intense battle area. To attack the weaker side, and then slowly defeat everyone else one by one was their strategy. Lucia and Angelene were both clear about this.

(How do we get away from them?…)

As this group of nuns knew about Lucia’s attack power, they didn’t dare to approach her so easily. However, because this group of nuns knew how she attacked, Lucia couldn’t bluff them into retreating.

“All personnel on ships 12, 17, and 19 are to retreat immediately. If you can make it, jump! Like the previous ships, we’ll rebuild it after sinking it!!”

It was the audio broadcast that they were so used to.

At the same time,

“What a hassle! You shouldn’t fight alongside the injured!!”

There was a wooden bridge linking here to the neighboring ship. The Amakusa members, with Tatemiya leading them, got onto the ship. The situation changed drastically. The circle surrounding Lucia's group was gradually breaking. The girl named Itsuwa was fighting alongside Lucia, using a Friuli spear like that the Navy uses.

If they wanted to change the situation, now was the time.

"Sister Angelene!"

"Ah…yes!"

Angelene shakily left the pillar. Lucia stood in front of her and exploded the wheel at the nuns, cutting a way out.

Part 4

Kamijou Touma was definitely not some whiz kid.

Because he was more or less used to fighting in the night, he roughly knew his ability. He definitely knew that he could win if it was a one on one fight; it would be dangerous if it was one on two, and he should run away without hesitation if it was one on three. This wasn't because he was exceptionally weak, but rather, in a fight without rules, numbers were more important than skills.

If he fought seriously, it would take about 5 seconds for him to be defeated.

But.

That was just for a human vs human fight.

"WOOOOHHH—!?"

Kamijou's fist ripped the air.

If the enemy was a human, both sides would probably fight until one lost consciousness. But if it was an enemy that would disappear on being touched, Kamijou still had a chance.

The numerous golems continued to squeeze into the narrow path. Kamijou's right hand was almost swinging about and hitting the incoming enemies. He didn't care how strong the fist was — no matter how light it was, as long as it could touch the enemies, it was good.

The golems moved like their gears were dropping.

Before Kamijou could confirm it, the golems from behind were using their spears and hammers to smash the ice that had become an obstacle in order to move forward.

"WHAT!!"

Kamijou frantically moved back. Even if the golems stopped moving, the ice remained there. If he was to stay there and fight, he would be buried alive under the ice.

But,

"A DEAD END!?"

Kamijou, who continued to back away, finally realized that his back was against the wall while confirming his rear path.

He turned to look back.

The golems looked like humans packed together as they continued to fill the entire corridor and close in.

This was unpreventable.

Though he could defend a hit, the pursuers would not let up.

"WOOOHHH!!"

Kamijou suddenly jumped sideways. The aisle was extremely narrow, and there

was only a wall formed by ice.

He extended his right hand out.

There was a pit in the wall.

Like Index and Orsola had guessed, the walls of the flagship were different from the escort ships.

Kamijou leapt inside, and at the same time, the numerous golems crashed into the dead end. With their huge momentum, the golems that crashed into the wall broke into pieces that scattered all over the place.

The little bits of ice danced about like smoke.

However, Kamijou had no time to confirm that.

He looked around the room and tried to grasp the landscape, only to stop midway.

This place was like the second level seats of a theater. In contrast to the glowing translucent seats that extended several meters, the depth was only about several centimeters. Near the carefully crafted pillar, one could see the bottom. It looked like a grand ornate Opera house, but far below, there was not a stage or an auditorium, but a fan-shaped array of many tables and chairs. It was like a Parliament meeting that one sees on television.

This obviously didn't fit a navy ship; these kinds of things weren't needed for a command relay system. Maybe the situation with the magic side was different, or maybe this was just a symbolic magic symbol, and they didn't use it as a meeting place. Either way, Kamijou couldn't tell which it was.

And he had no time to check it out.

With a loud bang, the ice golems rushed into the hole that Kamijou had opened.

"…!!"

If this kept up, he wouldn't be able to escape. After realizing that his back was against a pillar, he clenched his fist before leaping towards the ice golems.

The ice golems swung their ice swords horizontally.

Kamijou discovered that a block of ice more than 3m tall was hacking towards his abdomen from the right.

“WOOOHHHH!!”

In order to counter, just as Kamijou was about to use his right hand to knock the broadsword away—

The ice golem’s legs crumbled on their own.

From its thighs, the golem started to tilt backwards greatly.

The trajectory of the swinging broadsword changed.

The broadsword, which had been aimed at his abdomen, tilted as it swung up, aiming at Kamijou’s neck.

As if it was about to avoid the right hand that was protecting the abdomen.

(Damn…!!)

The wind pressure caused by the broadsword caused cold sweat to emerge from Kamijou’s face.

“WOOOHHHH!!”

Kamijou tried his best to dodge. Maybe his hair touched the broadsword, but it didn’t get cut without any resistance. He felt a sharp pain from his hair being ripped off, and could even hear a terrifying cracking sound.

However, he still managed to dodge it.

Kamijou endured the pain as he maintained his ducking position, as if he wanted to stay down before swinging his right fist again. After that, before the ice golem could land backwards, he slammed a punch into the chest. The golem, which had stopped moving and had its legs broken, crumbled as it lands.

“…It’s…over?”

Kamijou alertly assessed the situation and tried his best to adjust his breathing. Seemed like this was the last one, but considering the possibility of an ambush, he carefully moved toward the exit, but he didn't really need to.

Kamijou entered the hole that he had opened and ended up back in the aisle.

(Damn it, is Index's group alright? I feel that breaking the walls and floors will be a lot quicker if I want to meet up with them.)

On the other hand, this kind of destruction might reach the enemy. The ice golems appeared because of this feeling. According to Index and Orsola, this ship's regenerating ability was extremely slow, and because of the ship control and ritual facilities, they couldn't fire cannons or send the nuns over to stop them. But that was only the current situation. If the flagship was really about to sink, they would have to send people over no matter the risks.

Kamijou considered the situation.

(No matter what, the main thing is…if I can get near Agnese, the leader of the enemy will deal with me as the priority, and this would be a matter of time. There's no reason to hesitate about using my right hand!!)

He quickly made this resolution, and just as Kamijou was about to smash the wall with his right fist, an electronic noise could be heard from his pants pocket. It was his cell phone ringing.

(…My handphone?)

Kamijou surveyed the surroundings, confirming that no one was around before taking his cell phone out. He was somewhat astonished that he could use his cell phone out at sea. How far away was this place from land?

As he looked at the screen, what surprised him even more was that the call was from Index.

He pressed the button and placed the phone near his ear. As he had to defend himself with his right hand, he could only use his left hand. Though the cell phone had ordinary functions, his fingers felt unfamiliar with the phone.

After that.

“Ah, it’s connected.”

“…Is that Orsola? Why are you using Index’s phone?”

“I thought the fastest way to contact you would be to use this. Where are you?”

“Even if you ask that, I don’t know…”

He turned around to look, but there didn’t seem to be anything that he could use as a landmark. It was more like there were some extravagant art pieces all around, and there was even the possibility that he was buried by them.

“I was fighting off 20–30 ice golems, now I’m not sure where exactly I’m at.”

“…You can still say such scary words so casually. I’m…escaping with Index. There seems to be more of those ice guardians at the other places…”

“—”

Index and Orsola didn’t have Kamijou’s power, the Imagine Breaker. Also, they didn’t excel in magic combat. If they were to take the ice golems head on, it would be tough for them.

“Orsola. I’m…at the road where I broke off from you. Which direction did you two go?”

“Direction?”

“Yeah. Just a rough one will do. Tell me.”

“About that…I suppose, north.”

“Got it.”

Kamijou replied.

“I’ll head over.”

He held the phone with his left hand and swung his right hand about at the walls. With the sound of things breaking, a square-shaped hole appeared on the wall and the decorations inside. Kamijou passed through the wall that he destroyed,

and continued to destroy the walls inside, ignoring the sight of paths or walls.

“Hold up, Index has something to say to you…”

“Gimme gimme! Touma, can you hear me?”

That familiar voice could be heard from the phone.

“Touma, I just heard from Orsola that the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ requires some other spell called the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’, is that true?”

“That’s supposed to be it…wait, didn’t I mention it during the strategic meeting?”

“Maybe I didn’t hear it. Do you suspect my memory?”

Hearing the other party say this, Kamijou was speechless. This was the girl who managed to memorize 103,000 grimoires flawlessly, so she shouldn’t be mistaken.

Kamijou again destroyed the ice walls as he got onto another path.

“This…I didn’t ask. I heard that Lucia and Angelene weren’t certain of it as well.”

After saying this, Index’s voice could be heard.

“I heard they said that to activate this ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ is to crush Agnese’s mind.”

At this moment, Index, who was on the other side of the phone, let out a frustrated voice.

It was rare for her to let out such a voice because of magic.

“…Touma, the activation of the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ doesn’t need such an additional spell.”

“What?”

Kamijou inadvertently stopped.

He cautiously looked around while still focusing on the phone call.

“The ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ is an ancient level spell, and I explained before that it’s originally a large-scale spell that can suppress an enemy and was created in case the seaside country Venezia decided to revolt.”

“And after that?”

“Just think carefully. In other words, they can’t spend some time just to activate it. To select a suitable person and preparations would take quite a lot of time. Would they be able to defend against Venezia’s attacks if they waited like this?”

Kamijou couldn’t help but let out a surprised ‘Ah’.

Now that she mentioned it, it really seemed so. He had been tricked by the size of the fleet, and basically, this was a counterspell. It would be useless if it couldn’t react to the enemy’s attacks, unable fire immediately.

“The ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ can already fire on its own. If so, does that ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ really exist? At least according to the 103,000 grimoires, not one mentions the need for it. Basically, I can’t think of any reason why the Roman Catholic Church would attack Venezia now.”

Index paused for a while, then continued.

“From the time it was completed, the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ was said to be a large-scale spell that was too powerful. As it affected Venezia heavily while Venezia was the world’s trading landmark, they could have caused a huge commotion within. But in the beginning, when it was needed the most, it’s really hard to think of who would do such a thing.”

“But Lucia and Angelene didn’t look like they were lying.”

That's right.

Right now, the Roman Catholic Church was planning to use Agnese as the crux of its plan. If the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ could be used anytime, the reason why they would be delaying was because the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ wasn’t ready.

The ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’.

Though Lucia and Angelene said that this was the key activating it, even they weren’t too sure about the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’.

“What do you think they’re trying to do by using that with the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’, Index? Do you know what kind of spell the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ is?”

“Mm…instead of saying that it’s the official name of the spell, it’s more like the name of a plan that’s limited to the inner group of the Roman Catholic Church. It may be hard to understand with just that, but ‘Appointed Time’ and ‘Rosary’ are just basically timing.”

Kamijou stepped on the small fragments of ice and used his right hand to destroy another wall.

“The Cross, you’re talking about the Cross that nuns wear on their necks, right?”

“Actually, besides the Cross, the necklace is also important. There are 59 beads on the rope chain, and this is something of old Catholicism. People who travel to all kinds of Holy places would use these beads and count how many times they have prayed.”

“…In other words, regarding this ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’, isn’t it like a countdown? Or something like that?”

It was unknown whether Kamijou’s muttering reached Index and Orsola’s ears.

The reason was,

BOOM!!

With a sharp sound, the ceiling collapsed.

“Eh!?”

Kamijou instantly backed off.

But just this alone was unable to let him escape from the falling ice. The area

around the center of impact was also affected, and the surrounding ceiling became a huge weapon that was like an inverted pyramid.

“DAMN IT!!”

Kamijou moved his right hand up from the side of his abdomen.

Seeing the ceiling that was carved out in a square shape and about to crush him, Kamijou tilted his body slightly to avoid it. The ceiling slammed hard onto the floor, the impact affecting his ears and the tiny fragments hit his back. The force was a bit unexpected, and the cell phone in Kamijou’s left hand let out a weird sound.

Right now, he didn’t have time to even press a button.

Kamijou violently folded the phone back into his pocket and took 2–3 steps back.

The tiny frost-like pieces of ice replaced the smoke as they swayed about in front of his eyes.

At the center, there was a man standing there. He just swung a sledgehammer down at where Kamijou was standing.

It was a forty-plus year-old Caucasian man who was wearing a luxurious Holy robe.

Though his clothes were luxurious, they didn’t have the cleanliness that Index’s clothes had. All the clothing gave off an upstart presence. The four necklaces on his neck were overlapping each other like age rings, and there were ten Crosses on each of them. The Crosses were shining really brightly and were likely made of highly polished gold or silver. The shine of these Crosses was really persistent, like thick fat that seeps into meat.

Like a psychotic move, the man stroked a Cross that was hanging on his neck.

Though he was staring at Kamijou, his black pupils were moving about.

“…That right hand.”

Unexpectedly, he spoke in Japanese.

“Ha, are you envious?”

Hearing Kamijou’s reckless response, the man frowned. He silently showed some slight disgust and anxiousness.

“You’re not convinced? If rejecting God’s grace is your nature, then using that as a weapon is even more of a sin. If you have heard of God’s teachings, you should immediately cut off that hand and immediately beg for God’s grace.”

Such chilling words.

What was scary wasn’t the content of the words, but the concentrated amount of emotion, that was like crushed yellow fat, in those words.

“Besides, Pagan monkeys can’t understand human words. I specially spoke in your language, and yet this is the answer I get? Then let me, Biagio Busoni, open your eyes, you enemy of God. I really can’t stand monkeys acting like humans.”

“You’re Biagio? Then, you should know where Agnese is, right?”

“I know, but that doesn’t mean I’ll tell you.”

The man called Biagio folded his arms.

A little metal sound could be heard.

Each of his hands was holding a Cross that had been hanging on his neck.

He tossed the Cross in front of Kamijou’s abdomen.

“The Cross reveals the rejection to evil.”

BOOM!! The two Crosses expanded.

The rate they were expanding was like a cannon firing. They instantly became 3m long and 40cm thick as they attacked. It was like a storm of metal muscles attacking.

“WOOHH!!”

Kamijou used his right fist to knock aside the Crosses that had become a wall, but he only managed to destroy one side. Meanwhile, the sharp end of the other Cross on the other side, that was like granite, sent him flying back.

The blunt sound caused by this intense impact could be heard.

Kamijou was knocked to the ground, and rolled back about 2–3m. Just as he was about to use his hand to lift himself off the floor, the ice wall reacted to Kamijou's right hand. With a cracking sound, the floor was carved up in a square shape, and Kamijou fell onto the path on the floor below.

As he was inside a ship that was made completely of ice, there was nothing to cushion the impact. Kamijou gritted his teeth as he endured the pain, carefully using his left hand to support himself.

From the large hole above his head, Biagio's voice could be heard.

"When St. Margaret was swallowed by the evil dragon, she expanded the Cross to stab the evil dragon's stomach from the inside. The Cross that the Church erects can also be used to eliminate enemies and create a safety zone—just like this."

From the hole in the ceiling, 2–3 Crosses were tossed down like grenades.

The Crosses immediately expanded in the air.

Instead of saying that these were Crosses, they were more like laser weapons flying all around. Kamijou immediately got onto the floor and rolled, as the Crosses that were like metallic muscles scraped past the tip of his nose, the four sides of the Crosses stabbed into the floor and walls. As the arrangement was really messy; it was hard to tell which direction the attack was coming from. Just like that the straight path was sealed off.

(Damn it…got to find an exit before my movements are sealed—!!)

Just as Kamijou was about to swing his right hand, another sound could be heard from above.

"On the other hand, the Cross has the ability to correct people's prideful nature, no matter the weight of it. The Virgin St. Lucia was pulled with ropes by 1,000

men and 2 bulls yet didn’t move. And the young St. Christopher who was famous for his strange powers, yet fell under the weight of the Son of God—that’ll be like…this.”

CRACK!! The ceiling split apart.

What were falling down from the broken ceiling were several Crosses that were only several centimeters long. However, they were as fast as a cannon shot…not only that, they were rather heavy, as if gravity had increased by several thousand times.

Kamijou used his body to slam into the giant Cross and extended his right hand out. Before confirming whether there were any obstacles breaking, he rolled to the front, and the huge weight of the Cross narrowly grazed past Kamijou’s shoulder. Just like that, his joint felt painful, as if it nearly popped out, and the pain immediately spread around.

“…! GYAAAHHH!!”

Even so, he continued to use his right hand to destroy the walls, jumping from the aisle into a cabin. He intended to take action and try to avoid Biagio’s aiming.

“Don’t destroy it too much. It’ll take quite some time to repair it.”

The ceiling broke again, as numerous Crosses fell down from above Kamijou. The unexpectedly heavy Crosses turned into metal stakes as they destroyed the Cabin. Kamijou didn’t really jump aside, but rather managed to avoid them by pressing his back against the wall.

Biagio leapt down the hole in the ceiling.

Small pieces of ice flew like frost when he stepped onto the cracked floor.

Kamijou kept his back onto the wall.

“Preaching about ‘don’t destroy’, yet aren’t you the one destroying it recklessly?”

“I know which parts need to be destroyed, and which shouldn’t. Your method is

too messy. Oh yeah, it's like letting an amateur without knowledge take care of some antiques. I know you're working hard, but you have to learn."

Biagio's proper and speckles expression was starting to show some signs of anxiety.

Index said before that this flagship controlled the other ships. Once the ice decorations continued to change shape, the escort ships would move with the signal given…if so, Kamijou's right hand had more or less done some damage to the controls of the ship.

"Humph. Looks like this broken ship repairs itself a lot slower than the other ships. Worked so hard to get into this main ship, yet this place is weaker than the other ships. So disappointing."

"The 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea's original defense is a good 200 times stronger than the other escort ships. But because the power was separated to the other ships, it affected the completion rate there."

"The 'there' you're talking about is?"

"The 'Rosary of the Appointed Time'. It's too soon already, stop acting dumb."

"…"

The 'Rosary of the Appointed Time' again.

Index said before that this additional spell was unrelated to the 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea' spell meant to suppress Venezia. Though Biagio's words may not be completely true, to continue to try and do such a disadvantageous thing, was there any important significance behind it?

"No matter what, as long as I beat you and save Agnese, it'll be all over. I'm not thinking too much, so let me settle this simply."

"Those words show that you're going against God's will; this is quite heretical."

Biagio pulled off 7 Crosses from his neck,

And tossed them into the air like he was saying farewell.

“—Then, my Cross will reject this evil.”

Part 5

On the same ship, nobody could stay put for even one minute.

Tatemiya Saiji used the wooden bridge that he made to get off one sinking ice escort ship onto a neighboring ship. Before his eyes, a newly formed ice ship emerged from the water, replacing the ship that was just destroyed.

“Ah! Damn it! Why is it endless!!?”

He used the side of his Flamberge to knock down 2–3 nuns from the Agnese Forces as he shouted out. He pulled out some bundles of paper from his pockets. After using the paper bundles, boards that looked like surfboards appeared out of nowhere. The number of boards matched the number of people, as they stuck onto the back of the nuns.

The ship was quickly sunk by the cannon fire. Even so, considering the number of people, it was impossible to carry all the unconscious nuns and move about. Thus, the Amakusa could only prepare such a ‘floating ring’ to prevent the unconscious nuns from drowning. If they created a huge wooden ship, it would end up being fired at.

(Though we would definitely save them, it’s really unsettling to leave the sinking ships like that.)

Tatemiya lowered his jaw as he heard the audio broadcast echo throughout, saying that they were about to bomb this ship.

Seemed like most of the controls of the ship were automatic.

Thus, no matter how many people they beat, it was ineffective on the fleet itself. In terms of pure fighting power, the more than 200 nuns were terrifying, but the large number of cannons was even worse. If they couldn’t settle this current

problem, they wouldn’t be able to change the situation.

The Amakusa could only endure it until the end.

(Cheh, if possible, I want to hurry up and destroy that flagship, even if it’s a little bit.)

But Tatemiya didn’t do so.

If the main forces of the Amakusa moved towards the flagship, the nuns would come after them as well. The battleground would change, and Kamijou’s group would end up getting involved.

The base under the floor was the real base.

Tatemiya gently swung his wave-bladed longsword.

“Can’t be helped. I can only take care of this side, and let the proceedings be smooth!!”

With this cry, he rushed towards a group of nuns gathered in a corner.

Part 6

“—Then, my Cross will reject this evil.”

The seven Crosses suddenly expanded as if they were exploding.

The metal sparks that the Crosses made flew about freely in the air.

Kamijou used his right hand to forcefully press onto the wall behind him, and immediately, he fell through the square hole and onto the other side of the wall.

The thick and huge bone-like Crosses stabbed hard into the floor, walls, and ceiling. Kamijou continued to roll on the floor.

“To think that you’d come up with such a thing, damn it!! You guys don’t have any right to do this to Venezia!!”

“A pity, you’ve guessed wrongly. That isn’t my target.”

From where the barrage was coming from, Biagio smiled.

“WHAT DID YOU SAY!?”

“Then, I’ll say it to you for free. What’s the point of me doing that? But never mind…at least it’s a lot more interesting than what you thought.”

“!!”

Kamijou gritted his teeth as he used the momentum caused by rolling to get up.

He clenched his right fist, retraced his escape path, and rushed at Biagio.

However, before that,

“All sorts of meanings exist for the Cross, and most of them were added after the Son of God was executed. The Cross itself already existed before that, but all the purposes that existed before that time were wiped away by Christianity, because those were of evil pagan beliefs.”

Biagio continued on.

He chose a favorite Cross of his from among the numerous Crosses in front of his chest, psychotically stroking them with his fingertips, and said,

“Among them, only one has the remaining meaning that exists from the ancient times. That’s the most important thing to Christianity, and the most ancient use that has relation to the Son of God. That’s—”

Kamijou used his right hand to destroy the huge Crosses that were between him and Biagio. Just as he was about to leap at Biagio, the man in a luxurious Holy robe pulled the Cross down as if he was pulling his clothes up, and raised it above his head.

“—a tool of execution.”

Biagio used a low, yet mocking sound that lacked seriousness to say,

“—Simon bears the Cross of the Son of God.”

CRACK.

Hearing this, Kamijou’s vision suddenly changed drastically.

“…Ah?”

He was hit somewhere near his right shoulder, and a sense of pain struck. After shaking his head, he found that his vision was tilted upside-down, as if his body was hung upside-down by the tail. After his face touched the floor, Kamijou realized that…he was upside down. It took him several seconds for him to realize this phenomenon.

(What just…)

He had been attacked?

But he didn’t understand what just happened.

In the past, he knew that ‘he was attacked’, so he could defend and avoid. But this time, it was different. He couldn’t even tell when he was going to be attacked.

A sure kill.

In Kamijou’s confused mind, this phrase lodged tightly into him.

Even if he wanted to get up, he didn’t have any strength in his hands. Even if he lay down and tried to get up, he would be crushed in an instant.

His mind started to go blank.

At this moment, a little metal sound could be heard, turning Kamijou’s consciousness outside.

It was the numerous Crosses colliding in mid-air that was letting out this sound.

“—The Cross reveals the rejection to evil.”

With a low sound, the sounds of flesh being hammered and the ice floor being destroyed continued to echo throughout.

Part 7

Index and Orsola were running about in an aisle of the flagship ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’.

From the outside, the flagship looked more than 2 times larger than the other escort ships, yet the width of the pathways didn’t seem different…but that wasn’t the case. There were ordinary statues of angels on both sides of the path, and even a door was intricately carved in the form of a fairy tale scene. The huge number of art pieces suppressed the originally wide aisle.

Not even a deluxe palace and majestic palace were enough to describe this scene. Only an exaggerated comparison like a palace made of gold or a diamond pyramid would be suitable in describing it. In reality, this scene made one feel really uncomfortable.

Orsola held onto the silver Lotus Wand with both hands as she ran down the path, looking around as she said to Index,

“…This place is so quiet it’s frightening me.”

“That’s because their work was already assigned.”

Index softly replied,

“Nobody expected the enemy to get inside the flagship in the first place. Before that—the enemy had removed all the enemies, thus the enemy ship has to specialise for the escort fleet to work smoothly…or something like that.”

“If that’s the case…”

Orsola continued to make sounds of footsteps while she continued to run.

“The other nuns aren’t here because even though they’re of the same kind; they’re not allowed to step onto the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’. This is to

prevent the nuns from defecting.”

After running for a while, they reached the entrance to a staircase.

The staircase led both up and down, yet Index ran downstairs without any hesitation. Orsola seemed rather panicky as she followed her.

“Wait, do you know where Agnese is?”

“Of course!”

Index immediately replied,

“I roughly know the functions of this ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ ship. Though I don’t know what kind of thing the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ is, the place most suitable for the spell in the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ is fixed. Thus there’s only that place!!”

The stairs were extremely long, as if they were surrounding a large tower.

After running down the stairs for a long while, both of them finally reached the bottom of the stairs.

“This is…”

Orsola lowered her voice.

The place was like a hall. In this overly spacious place, ahead of them were double doors that were twice the size of Orsola. It was unknown how thick the doors were, maybe even thicker than Orsola’s body.

The entrance to the hall didn’t just link to the staircase Index’s group came from. There were numerous staircases linking here, as if all of them were linked here.

What an intriguing design.

Someone completely ignored the basics in shipbuilding. Assuming that to even barely get past this design, one had to swim around all the pillars and beams, if they really had to do this—

“Instead of saying that they prepared a room in the ship…”

“It’s more like they decorated the surroundings of this room in the shape of a ship.”

Index got near the main door.

She placed her face near the door, and wanted to touch it, only to stop midway.

“The door here…has a defensive spell placed on it. Most likely, it’s based on the legend of St. Blaise. When the pagan army chased after the Saint who crossed the lake, they weren’t able to walk on water, and sank into the water.”

“This means…you’re saying that those without entry permit will be dragged into the water once they touch the door?”

Even on the flagship, Index and Orsola hadn’t met anyone.

Looking at the entire situation, the only ones who could open this door were Agnese and Biagio.

Index glanced at Orsola.

“Hm, if it’s a direct method.”

“That should be the case.”

Index was the keeper of 103,000 grimoires, while Orsola was a grimoires and spells analyst. Facing this difficult scenario, both of them first thought of the same thing.

Index brought her nose close to the door and reinvestigated it. She was analyzing the components of the thick ice wall. Orsola continued to stand aside, holding the Lotus Wand, wary that Index may be taken down by the defensive mechanism.

But,

On the floor around them, there were ice pillars that were larger than humans. There weren’t just one or two, but 10–20 of them. The ice pillars started to form shapes as if an invisible blade was carving them out.

“This…”

“They’re here to replace those nuns!?”

Besides the ice golems, there were two carriages with cannons on them. The golems and even the cannons were slowly aiming at them.

“!”

Orsola immediately raised the Lotus Wand in front of her.

Though she was not used to combat, Index didn’t have a weapon with her, and couldn’t use magic. Thus, Orsola felt that she had to fight against the golems.

“Aim at the centre!!”

Index shouted before leaping sideways.

The golems and cannons turned towards her. It was more like they were forcefully pulled by magnetism rather than it being a defensive mechanism.

Index jumped into a lane, and said,

“Go and save Agnese! I’ll divert their attention here!! Don’t worry, these guards can sense a person’s will, so I can use my Spell Intercept on them!!”

According to Index’s hypothesis, these ice guards were made from the ‘keeper’ of the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. Thus, they couldn’t let their guard down completely. Approximately after every few minutes, the keeper would prepare a ‘battle report’ and ‘point of intervention’ to see whether there was a need to correct it.

Just like Sherry Cromwell and the stone golem that she controlled, Ellis.

If it was not completely automatic, she could intervene.

No matter how advanced the magic was, the one operating it was still human.

“But!!”

Before Orsola could rebut, a strong wind blew.

All the guards passed by Orsola and rushed after Index, who had disappeared in the lane. Like a gravel truck rapidly moving past, the air was compressed to form wind.

With a *BOOM!!* sound, Orsola instinctively closed her eyes.

When she opened her eyes again, she couldn’t see Index, the golems, or the cannons.

“INDEX!!”

Orsola, who was holding onto the Lotus Wand with one hand, shouted.

But no matter how much time passed, there was no reply.

Part 8

Agnese Sanctis was leaning on the ice ball, listening to the sounds outside.

“…”

The sound of cannons being fired, the sound of blades colliding with each other, the sound of ships being blown up, the sound of angry cries of humans—and the sound of people fighting outside the room just now.

All these were because of her.

To take away Agnese, to protect Agnese: the fight continued for these reasons.

What’s with this? she thought.

It felt like everyone was worried for her. This shouldn’t be the case at all, yet they caused a misunderstanding in her.

She thought that this was the highest point.

Even if she left here, she could only go down.

However,

Could she still continue to rely on others?

Could she still continue to have this hope?

(…)

Agnese Sanctis continued to let her mind wander.

After that,

She shook her head left and right.

There was a cracking sound.

The double-sided doors that were sealed perfectly and unnaturally started to make an opening sound. Agnese turned to look at the doors. It was not the boy she met on the escort ship, but it was not like she hadn’t seen this person on the ‘Queen’s Fleet’.

“Orsola…Aquinas?”

The nun in black habit was supposed to be chased out of the Roman Catholic Church, yet she was still wearing that nun's habit. For some reason, she was holding Agnese’s staff with both hands. It was not hard to remove the defensive spell on the doors, but maybe because Orsola had focused too much in her casting, her breathing was somewhat hot and erratic.

Even so, she didn’t look tired.

Seeing the face of Agnese, who was leaning on the ice ball, Orsola gave a radiant smile.

“You…”

Orsola said.

To Agnese’s ears, these sounded like words of a saintess.

“It’s great that you’re alright…”

For her to say such words, was it because she knew of the circumstances surrounding Agnese? She knew as much as Agnese did? Maybe even more. Because of this, seeing Agnese’s unscathed face, Orsola could make this expression.

She definitely did that.

And because she did that.

“…Wh…Why?”

Agnese asked in a dazed tone.

“You should know what the situation is like right now, right? Don’t you really want to leave the ‘Queen’s Fleet’? You said that you don’t want to stay in this dangerous place. You know that there are so many unreasonable facilities, so you promised to leave. But why did you come back with this expression?”

“You really flatter me.”

Orsola laughed bitterly,

“I can’t just see everything based on first glance. Even the layout of the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’, I needed Index to teach me this in order to understand it. I’m not so sure about the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time.”

Orsola held onto the silver staff tightly with both hands, and said,

“…And even if I do, nobody will teach me how to escape from here. We can’t just help everyone and leave you behind when you’re not telling anyone of your pain.”

“So…”

Agnese softly replied.

She felt that the Orsola who was in front of her was a lot different from what she had thought her to be.

“That’s why I say that you’re strange. I actually wanted to help Lucia and Angelene using myself as bait, but that’s it. As long as the results are perfect, the steps taken don’t matter. Aren’t you satisfied?”

Every time she said a word, Agnese felt that she was really even more pitiful.

Even so, she continued on,

“Do you still remember what I did during The Book of the Law affair? The one who forced you to Japan, arrested you and abused you WAS ME! One would not even care about that sort of person! To be bullied to this extent, HOW CAN YOU NOT HATE ME!?”

“Do I really have to say the answer to that question?”

Orsola silently said,

“Because you knew about all these, you would hide it from us and divert the attention to Lucia and Angelene, right? You knew that if we knew about this, we’d stop you. If you still want a clear answer, I’ll deliver it to you myself.”

She stared at Agnese’s face,

“In actual conclusion, I don’t know the answer. I’m still undergoing nun training. I have no confidence about myself, always thinking that I know what’s right and what’s wrong, or have wisdom and conscience to decide this for others, and for myself.”

She continued,

“At least, Lucia and Angelene decided that they have a duty to save you.”

“…”

Agnese turned silent.

“Even when Lucia escaped to a safe place, she said that she wanted to save you, and came back. Angelene said that she was afraid of hurting her comrades, so she was hesitant in making her weapons…I don’t think there’s a false sense in their words. In that situation, the ones who were even more perfect than anyone

were them — I can’t match them.”

Word by word, these slow words had no coercive force in them.

Even so, Agnese stopped breathing.

“Are you unsatisfied with Lucia and Angelene’s words?”

Orsola said to the petite nun,

“Even when they only saw despair and were chased by many, they still wanted to smile and laugh with everyone. Don’t you think these words are enough?”

“__”

Agnese slightly glanced at Orsola’s eyes.

Her lips were trembling, as if they were trying to say something.

“That’s impossible. Are you so naïve to think that the Roman Catholic Church will sit by and do nothing?”

A man’s voice suddenly interrupted,

“That would be an inconvenience for me, Sister Agnese; you can’t escape your responsibility. It’s true that the Roman Catholic Church has 2 billion people. Even if you die here, the plan will still go on. We’ll just find another suitable person. But do you know how hard it is to find a suitable person among these 2 billion people? Troublesome, isn’t it? I really hate troublesome things the most.”

These light words destroyed all goodwill.

Orsola turned to look behind her, where the voice came from.

The forty-plus year-old man was wearing a luxurious Holy robe. There were 4 necklaces on his neck, each full of Crosses hanging on it. His face revealed a distorted asymmetrical smile.

Biagio Busoni.

Also, his hand was dipped in blood.

That likely wasn't his blood. There didn’t seem to be any visible wound, and there was no look of pain on his face.

“…What’s with that blood?”

“So cold, you don’t have to worry about me. I’ll answer your question because I hate troublesome things. So, in other words, I settled it.”

“…”

Orsola tightened her grip on the Lotus Wand.

Even Agnese, who was standing nearby and watching all of this, was clear that Orsola wasn’t familiar with fighting at all. She was the type of nun that would fight on the table and was of a completely different breed from Biagio and Agnese. Before talking about strengths and weaknesses, the basic premise wasn’t the same at all. It was like someone in desert get-up trying to cross Antarctica.

Biagio probably saw through it right at the start. He continued to have an expression of leisure.

Not even a defensive stance.

“If possible, I’d like to avoid fighting here; there are a lot of delicate things here. Why do you think I prepared all the defenses around the ‘Queen’s Fleet’? It’s because that it would be troublesome if things were going to be destroyed here.”

“…To use a large-scale spell on Venezia. Are you trying to let an outdated antique regain its glory?”

“Humph, this seems to be a common misunderstanding. However, that is wrong. We’re not going to use this on the marine country, but something bigger.”

“You’re still so carefree.”

Orsola said.

Agnese thought that this wasn’t good. Biagio’s common tactic was to have a conversation with the enemy without the enemy realizing that he was estimating

the distance between the enemy and himself.

“Yes. It’s alright even if I say it to you. This is still within my ability, after all. Also, since this is a ritual that one must do for a person who’s about to die, of course this is acceptable. Oh yes, I said the same thing to the boy just now. No, it’s more of an explanation. It’ll be even more troublesome if you continue to resist, but this is still acceptable, so I hope that you’ll allow this level of stubbornness of mine.”

“__”

Orsola instinctively took a step forward.

In contrast, Biagio didn’t do anything.

It was like there was no need to notice the enemy’s movements.

“Where was I? Oh yes, the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’. I suppose you know that that was originally a spell intended to be used against Venezia. Though it could destroy Venezia in one shot, there wasn’t any use other than that. The reason is simple: if it landed in the hands of the enemy, it would be bad if it was used back on us.”

Biagio stroked a Cross on his neck.

“The ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ was completed in the 9th century…when the remains of one of the Twelve Apostles, St. Mark was brought into Venezia. At that time, Venezia wanted to create a religious environment like how the Vatican protected St. Peter’s remains. Wary of this, the Roman Catholic Church created such a spell.”

Hearing him say this, Orsola suddenly frowned.

She knew this wasn’t the time to ask this, but she still asked,

“Are you lying? Venezia’s development began in the 9th century. If the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ was already capable at that time…”

“That’s right. After that, Venezia, at its prime, conquered Padova, Vicenza, Metz, Chioggia, all these surrounding countries. You should know about this history,

right?”

“…Are you trying to bait my thoughts with this level of knowledge?”

“There were actually many reasons, and it’s said that one of the reasons was the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’. At that time, the Venetian government was unable to determine where this large scale super weapon was, and thus could only destroy those suspicious places. It’s not unexpected for the Roman Catholic Church to plan on using the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ after what Venezia did… in the end, they were afraid and didn’t use it. Though Venezia’s power was great, if they lost this land, it was hard to predict the impact it would have caused economically.”

“…”

“However, Venezia spent a lot of money to finance these invasions and finally ended up in financial distress. The country crumbled, and thus, you can’t ignore its strength. Of course, this wasn’t just because of the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’…just looking at the results, I suppose our aim was achieved.”

“Even when you didn’t use it, you could destroy a country by just using the fear of a large-scale super weapon…but,”

Hearing Orsola say this so softly, Biagio grinned.

“Yes, that is it. The ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ can only be used on Venezia. No matter how attractive it is, there’s no point if we don’t remove the targeting limit. Right now, Venezia is a clean tourist destination, and the Roman Catholic Church now has no reason to separate themselves from Venezia.”

Then why is it? Just as Orsola was about to ask this, she stopped.

There was a little possibility in Biagio’s words.

“That’s right, you discovered it.”

Biagio Busoni concluded,

“The aim of the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ is to remove the targeting limit of the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’.”

Orsola stopped breathing.

Agnese's eyes widened. Maybe she hadn't heard of this.

The Bishop continued on without caring about this, a smile appearing on his face.

"That was so long. No, actually, the one who set up the 'Rosary of the Appointed Time' wasn't me, but them. Really, it must have been really long, huh? We have such a great weapon in the 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea', yet to use it more, we had to spend quite some effort! That was the reason why this was left alone for so many hundred years!!"

"No way…"

Orsola inadvertently let out a sound.

"Then, you want to use the 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea' to destroy any city that's an eyesore? To use a large-scale spell so that you can brag that you can destroy the marine country called Venezia that was also famous for its strong magic!!?"

"You're misunderstanding. We're not talking about cities, we're talking about the world."

Biagio said delightedly.

As if it was like the fairy tale of 'The King's ears are donkey ears'.

"Hoho, the 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea' doesn't just destroy cities, but also everything related to the city. Like, if Venezia is destroyed, whether it's all the art pieces or sculptures, all of them will be destroyed! This Venetian Sect knowledge will disappear. Hm? Something like this, what if it's used on the city that controls the enemy world?"

The enemy world.

The city controlling it.

From these words, Orsola at least got what Biagio's trying to say.

“Don’t tell me…Academy City!?”

“That’s right, Sister Orsola. The ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ can destroy all the influence that a city brings. All the science and technology is affected by Academy City, even the trivial stuff!! If we can destroy all those, which would include half of the world, the detestable force called the science side WOULD ALL BE PURGED WITHIN A SINGLE NIGHT!!!”

Such chilling words.

Biagio’s words indicated a tone that he believed only those he sees exist. The people that didn’t exist in his life were just background silhouettes. The destruction of the science side wasn’t as easy as cutting the world in half, but rather, people would die. “Do you really think that everyone will be happy if Academy City is destroyed?”

“I don’t think so. There are also parasites among the magic side. The Anglicans, the Russian Orthodox, Islam which took away the Cross, Buddhism and Norse Mythology. We just need to continue on and destroy all the obstacles! ONE DAY, ALL THE IMPURE THINGS WILL BE REMOVED, AND ONLY THE ROMAN CATHOLICS WILL BE LEFT!!”

“You…!!”

The ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’, which was meant to prevent Venezia from revolting, didn’t need a second shot. But from Biagio’s words, this may have been overcome.

(Maybe Lucia and the other nuns were forced to do those weird things…those were preparations to remove the limitations…)

Orsola thought, but didn’t utter a word.

On the other hand, Biagio seemed irritated with her trembling as he continued.

It seemed like he lost all his enthusiasm as his speech was a lot slower.

“It isn’t thorough enough. Since when has religion become a cheap tool? Sodom and Gomorrah were definitely burned, yet science pointed out that a religious trial is an error. This is the real misunderstanding. Why must God endure this for

humans? If there are people who are bad to God, there's nothing wrong with erasing them. This is nothing different from burning weeds, even if people are burnt in the process, it can't be helped."

To use a spell of such a scale with such thinking, how much damage would be caused? Just to burn an enemy, it may end up with the entire city getting burned. This would end up as the greatest tragedy in Christian history.

Biagio glared at Orsola.

Seeing the trembling nun, the Bishop was drunk with delight as he let out a trembling and excited voice,

"This is the Roman Catholic Church's wish, so we'll be really troubled if you trouble us here. Besides, I'm not going to let you take Agnese away from here."

"I should be the one saying that!"

Orsola said as she waved the Lotus Wand.

Biagio sighed in an uninterested manner,

"I told you not to trouble us."

The moment he said this, the winner was decided.

Orsola started to chant spells in order to activate the Lotus Wand, but it was too late. It could be said that she was too careful. In battle, one only needs to convey the meaning, but Orsola focused as she started to create a spell, as if she's trying to carve a face out. She wouldn't be able to make it.

In contrast, Biagio just stroked the Cross on his neck.

"—The Cross reveals the rejection to evil."

As he muttered this, he easily pulled 30 Crosses and tossed them at Orsola's feet. Orsola got wary as she tried to knock away those Crosses with the staff.

BOOM!!

Before she could do anything, the little decorations expanded as if they were

exploding. That was a real explosion: the speed at which they expand was like a storm expressed by metal. As if a metal rod broke past a door, one of the Crosses was able to knock the Lotus Wand from Orsola's hand.

Agnese, who was behind Orsola, gasped.

Another 20 Crosses attacked an unarmed Orsola.

The second volley expanded above her shoulders, hitting downwards as if the Crosses were about to dislocate her joints. Just as she was recoiling from the impact, the third volley exploded above her as she bent down. The loud sounds of a mauling echoed throughout the room, as Orsola's legs turned limp and collapsed hard onto the ice floor.

Even so, she unsteadily tried to get up.

"Hoho! Stop it, Sister Orsola!!"

Biagio didn't even move a step.

Maybe because this plan that had taken quite a while was about to be completed, he was smiling.

He pulled another Cross from his four necklaces and tossed it. The Cross arced greatly over Orsola's head as if it was a bouquet of flowers thrown into a crowd by a bride.

"—The weight of the Cross corrects the haughty."

In an instant, the Crosses in the air let out a vibrating sound.

The Crosses that were instantly affected by numerous of thousands times of gravity flew near Orsola's rear. The ice floor exploded on impact and the floor was flipped up. Orsola was in a crouching position as she felt the impact, and rolled sideways.

Even so.

Even though she had lost her weapon, she felt the hits all over her body. Orsola tried to move her fingers slightly.

Just to resist.

“Humph, I said before that you should stop. I didn’t become a Bishop by skin-deep impressions. I can release all the multiple meanings of the Cross and use all kinds of power. If you want to kill me, be prepared to explode a Cathedral! The Anglicans have the Walking Church. Even without that, I alone can match against a sanctuary!!”

After that, Biagio looked away from Orsola.

He said to Agnese, who was standing behind him,

“It’s a bit early, but let’s start, Sister Agnese.”

“Eh…?”

Hearing these words, Agnese looked surprised as she stared at Biagio.

The Bishop didn’t look disgusted.

“The Amakusa on the deck, and Sister Orsola who’s over there; though they’re really unsightly, they won’t really affect the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ that is meant to remove the limitations of the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’. Hoho… I’ve awaited this for a long time. Are you people trying to suffocate me to death? PREPARE TO LEAVE YOUR NAME IN HISTORY, SISTER AGNESE!!”

With Biagio’s words, the ice ball that Agnese was leaning on started to change.

“It’s beginning to adjust. You just need to let your magic synchronise with the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ and the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’. HURRY UP AND SETTLE THIS AND REPORT THIS TO THE VATICAN!!”

A large hole appeared on the ball as if a pupil in an eye expanded.

It was like it was trying to tell her to hurry up and go in.

“…! HOW CAN I…LET YOU DO THAT!!”

“You still want to resist with that body of yours? Or do you wish for me to continue to rob your freedom?”

Biagio didn’t even look at Orsola’s face.

He used his fingers to stroke the Crosses on his neck, and said,

“It’s about to start. Be happy, Sister Agnese. You’ll go down in history as the one who buried the most enemies in Christian history. This is your long time wish, right when you first used that Lotus Wand!”

“…”

On hearing Biagio’s words, Agnese nodded her head in a dazed manner.

Looking down, she could see the Lotus Wand rolling on the floor.

His words couldn’t be wrong.

In fact, before The Book of the Law affair, this was also the reason why she had wanted to kill Orsola. To bury the enemies of the Roman Catholic Church, it was for that reason. If that boy hadn’t shown up and stopped her, Agnese would have definitely killed Orsola and been delighted.

Removing her own enemies was what Agnese had always wanted.

But,

“You…the ‘enemies’ that you mentioned include Agnese…!”

Orsola, who had been nearly killed by Agnese once, moved her body and actually tried to protect Agnese.

Even when her body was covered with wounds and she couldn’t move properly.

She still dragged her body that was unable to stand up.

On seeing Orsola like this, Agnese froze.

Hearing Orsola’s words, Biagio snarled,

“Right now, you’re no longer a part of the Roman Catholic Church, but of the Anglican Church, that’s why you’re so anxious. If you were a Roman Catholic, you wouldn’t be so afraid even if you’re facing the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’.”

“You can say this because you based your actions on suspicion. This is a characteristic of us Roman Catholics. Because we can only weigh between benefits and damages, we can’t understand why people would act based on their beliefs. No, even if they can understand, they won’t believe it.”

Agnese heard those same words.

She knew that the Sister named Orsola Aquinas hadn’t changed since that time.

“I said that I can’t accept it. Agnese is about to be sacrificed for this useless thing! Why would you not believe this! I can’t stand the fact that a lot of people are going to be killed!!”

“…Is that so.”

The smile on Biagio’s face silently vanished.

He played with some of the Crosses on his neck, and after that, used his finger to flick one of them.

“I changed my mind. Even if it’s a small obstacle, it should be removed completely.”

Hearing those words, Orsola froze.

It was not just because of the actual danger, but because this nun was unused to the murderous intent that others would release. Her normal life had nothing to do with this world.

Agnese thought,

(What’s her reason for doing this? If she was from Academy City, I could still explain this. If she was living in the science side, I could also understand it, because that’d be a danger to her. If she doesn’t stop Biagio, forget about her normal life, even her life would be endangered.)

But Orsola was different.

Even if Academy City was destroyed, she wouldn’t die. If Biagio aimed at the Anglican Church, she just needed to switch to another sect like how she

abandoned the Roman Catholic Church. At least if she didn't stop the 'Rosary of the Appointed Time', she wouldn't be killed immediately under Biagio.

Even so, why must she obstruct him?

Didn't she want for even one second more?

"Christians love all neighbors, but are merciless. You should be clear if you read the calendar of the Saints' legends."

Biagio said as he stroked the Cross on his neck.

The force exerted by his fingers was like a snake, slithery yet firm. One could feel an unprecedented seriousness.

She will die, Agnese thought.

Thus, Agnese said behind Orsola,

"…Please…move away. No matter what, you'll die; you can't stop Biagio. You won't die if you don't resist."

Agnese thought, *Such irritating words.*

It was said that before Saints were executed, some pagan officers would tempt them to abandon their faith.

But,

"How can I do that…!!"

Orsola Aquinas firmly replied, as if she was a Saintess from a legend.

An immediate answer.

Her voice was trembling. Maybe it was because of pain, maybe there was some anxiety, maybe there was even fear, but Orsola still answered Agnese immediately. Maybe she didn't think through it too much, but because she believed that it didn't require much thought, she could say it immediately.

"It's over, Sister Orsola."

Biagio said.

This was another voice that had no hesitation in it and of a completely different resolution. Biagio Busoni would likely kill Orsola just like this. He believed in what was internal, and believed that it was definitely the correct thing. He refused to listen to others.

Orsola would die.

“In that situation, the ones who were even more perfect than anyone were them; I can’t match them.”

Maybe even if she didn’t resist, she would still have died.

“Are you unsatisfied with Lucia and Angelene’s words?”

Orsola said to an extremely weary Agnese,

“Even when they only saw despair and were chased by many, they still wanted to smile and laugh with everyone. Don’t you think these words are enough?”

Not just Agnese, even Lucia and Angelene were concerned.

The one who said these words was about to be killed in front of her.

“Hahaha! Laugh on, Sister Agnese, see how your dream is about to be crushed!”

Hearing Biagio’s words, Agnese’s consciousness exploded.

The sound of metal colliding could be heard.

“…What are you doing?”

Agnese didn’t answer Biagio’s question.

She was holding the Lotus Wand which was supposed to be on the floor. Agnese pulled Orsola behind and reached her arms forward, grazing past her nose as Agnese let the base of the staff stick into the ground, not moving at all.

The front tip of the Cross that suddenly expanded slammed hard into the Lotus Wand. The Cross was originally aimed at Orsola. If she were hit, her entire

forehead would have been blown off. Agnese, who was holding the staff, bit her teeth as she couldn't endure this strong impact.

Agnese spit onto the floor. She roughly swung the Lotus Wand around before holding it horizontally to the ground. That was unlike Orsola, who did it so carefully.

"Tutto il paragone. Il quinto dei cinque elementi. Ordina la canna che mostra pace ed ordine. (In accordance with all things. The fifth of the five elements. Open the crosier that symbolizes peace and order.)"

It was as if these rough actions represented faith in her staff.

The wordless meaning was that she believed her staff wouldn't be broken because of something trivial like this.

"Prima. Segua la legge di Dio ed una croce, Due cose diverse sono connesse. (First idol. In accordance to the laws of the son of god and the cross, link a different object with a different person.)"

In contrast, Biagio completely didn't mind the weapon being pointed at him.

Before that, before his question was answered, he was angry till his brain was full of blood.

"SISTER AGNESE!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!!?"

"Oh, just as you suspect."

Agnese glanced at the passionate Biagio, coldly dishing these words.

She revealed a villain-like smile.

"You're mistaken. I still want to take care of Sister Lucia and Sister Angelene, AND THE OTHER NUNS! TO THINK THAT THEY HAVE TO FIGHT BECAUSE OF THAT USELESS ORDER OF YOURS, I'M RAGING INSIDE!!"

Agnese concluded, her feet not moving back.

Seeing her attitude, Biagio’s temples jumped unnaturally.

“Stop acting…”

He clenched his teeth, pulled a Cross from in front of his chest and held it up into the air.

“…SO HIGH AND MIGHTY, YOU SINNER!!”

Pacha, a strange sound echoed.

After that,

“AH…Ugh!?”

An anguished cry came from behind. Agnese frantically turned back to see that Orsola had fallen. Orsola was sitting down, cold sweat breaking out of her as her neck swung left and right. As if she lost to this action, she collapsed onto the floor.

“You were just a monkey, and yet you wanted to talk like humans…”

The Bishop’s lips curled.

“—SIMON BEARS THE CROSS OF THE ‘SON OF GOD’.”

Biagio’s bellowing sounded like thunder.

Before Agnese could think ‘what happened’, her vision started to distort.

“Wha…t!?”

Just as she was trying her best to suppress this vomiting feeling, she lost her balance and kneeled with one knee. If she hadn’t do so, she would’ve been on the ground like Orsola.

At this moment,

Biagio moved near Agnese, who had a knee on the floor, and kicked hard into her jaw. The sharp tip of his hard shoe gave an irritating touch. Her body flew backwards, and collapsed.

“GHA…AAAH…!!”

She held onto the staff as she tried to get up, but she couldn’t exert any strength. It was like she was so weak that she couldn’t pull herself up, she couldn’t even move her body up. The Lotus Wand that she was so used to using couldn’t work at this moment.

(That attack…was…a spell.)

Even so, Agnese didn’t give up.

She tried her best to analyze her situation.

(It’s…it’s…)

From the contents of the spell, right now, Biagio should be using a spell that was based on the legacy of how the Son of God died on the Cross. However, the Son of God was killed by having nails hammered into his hands and feet, yet Agnese and Orsola didn’t have these injuries.

If that was the case,

(Before that, there was the legend of the Son of God and the Cross. When the Son of God was forced to carry the heavy Cross that he was going to be nailed onto on his back as he walked up the hill…)

“…That’s right, at that time, the Son of God…should have had no strength to carry the Cross…there was a man called Simon…who helped him carry the Cross onto the execution hill, wasn’t it?” (Teh_ping: Nope, Jesus here did carry the Cross up the hill himself.)

Biagio’s eyebrows twitched slightly.

After that, he smirked,

“Have you figured it out?”

“‘Forcing the enemy to carry a heavy weight’…this…is the real…form of the attack…on us. This shouldn’t be…just your own weight…it should be…of all the people…on the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. An attack…that focuses all the weight…of

the equipment…on a certain point. Is that right…”

Being hit by an attack that had at least 250 people’s weight, one would feel like they’d been flattened. But what was on them was only the ‘weight’; the ‘speed’ didn’t exist.

It was like an interrogation method of ‘putting a heavy weight on the stomach’. What was surprising was that the record was more than 400kg. If it was placed slowly, humans were able endure this weight.

“The reason why Orsola fell faster than me was likely because the attack came down from above. Like a consciousness being drained, it normally starts from the head.”

“Brilliant. As expected of one different from those pagan monkeys.”

For someone who had his attack method revealed, Biagio’s voice was too relaxed.

“BUT EVEN IF YOU KNOW, YOU CAN’T STOP IT!!”

He pulled down another one of those Crosses on his neck, and the moment he raised it high, the shrunk ‘weight’ collapsed down on Agnese.

Her consciousness was about to break.

Once she fainted, everything would be over.

As Agnese was the crux to the plan, she couldn’t be killed so easily. But Orsola was different: if Agnese didn’t resist, Orsola, who had no use to the plan, would be killed.

She knew that.

Even if she did.

The attack was aimed at the highest point of the body—so she raised the staff above her head to block it. Because of the enemy’s one attack, it was as if her bones were breaking as she felt this sharp pain, and the Lotus Wand fell onto the floor. As her hands recoiled, she got hit in the head.

Seeing her little resistance, Biagio mocked her,

“HAHA, WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO, SISTER AGNESE!!? USING SUCH A PATHETIC WAY TO STOP MY ATTACK? GET SOME STRONGER ARMS IF YOU WANT TO DO THAT!”

“Ugh…!!”

She had no strength left to resist. Agnese gritted her teeth, as if she was ashamed that she couldn’t do anything. Biagio again flicked a Cross on his chest and exerted more strength on Agnese’ head. Even so, Agnese’s continued to reach her hand out for the Lotus Wand.

“Is that so? Then, how about this right hand?”

Crack!! The sound of things breaking could be heard.

The sound came from behind Biagio, from the double doors of the huge square pyramidal room. A square opened in the door, or rather, a cuboid. Someone stepped into the room.

That person raised his right hand up.

He knocked away the weight attack that came down from above.

Biagio turned around and roared at the intruder,

“YOU LITTLE…PAGAN MONKEY DARE TO—!!”

“Idiot. You should at least confirm that there’s a corpse. My right hand isn’t as simple as you thought!!”

This boy didn’t ask Agnese anything. Why had she become Orsola’s shield? What was with this scene that didn’t fit the situation?

He didn’t mention this at all.

Maybe because since Biagio was in front of him, he had no time to ask.

This one strike from the boy, it would be even more natural to say that it was meant to save Orsola rather than Agnese.

However,

Agnese felt that she had salvation.

She felt that this Kamijou who was in front of her had saved her.

“WOOOHHHH!!!”

Kamijou shouted as he dashed to Biagio.

Biagio flicked a Cross on his chest, silently anxious as he backed away and lowered his jaw.

He again released another heavy attack.

Maybe this was reliance on the trump card, and with the sudden surprise of Kamijou suddenly coming over, this was probably an instant judgment. To choose the method of attack according to the danger level, this way of thinking was rather suited for actual combat.

However, there were exceptions.

“TOO SLOW!! HOW CAN I BE DONE IN BY THE SAME TRICK TWICE!!!!”

The boy immediately raised his right hand to reflect the heavy attack and rushed in front of Biagio.

“Damn it…!?”

Biagio frantically reached his hand out to the Crosses.

But Kamijou’s right fist slammed hard into the center of Biagio’s face first.

CRACK!!

The sound of flesh colliding with each other, and the sound of bones colliding with each other echoed throughout the place.

Part 9

After confirming that Biagio was unconscious, Kamijou finally relaxed his shoulders. He turned to Orsola and Agnese.

“While Biagio’s unconscious, hurry up and tie him up and confiscate his Crosses. If they’re still fighting on the deck, the situation there would be very unsettling. Oh yeah, Agnese.”

“Um…yes.”

The petite nun seemed like she thought she would be scolded as she stammered. Kamijou laughed and said,

“Thanks. If you didn’t protect Orsola, the situation would have been much worse.”

“…”

He was definitely saying thanks, but after Agnese revealed a look of surprise, she couldn’t say anything.

Kamijou revealed an awkward expression.

“(…Damn it, did I praise her the wrong way?)”

“(…If you really think so, you’re really a cute boy.)”

“(…Ah, what? Ow, it hurts. Why did you hit me?)”

Orsola placed a hand on her face as she continued to smack Kamijou with the other hand. Kamijou furiously tried to block her attacks.

“Oh yeah, the ‘Queen’s Fleet’…not just that, but how do we destroy this larger scale ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’? Agnese is the important person required to use the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’. If so, I want to destroy its value, whether it’s the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ or the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’, I want to destroy them to prevent them from being used again. Is there

something like a nucleus?”

“That…”

Agnese pondered for a while before turning to Biagio, who was unconscious on the floor.

“The flagship ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’…strictly speaking, it’s this square pyramidal room which we’re in, this can’t be replaced. This is because current technology can’t replicate it anymore, so once we destroy the functions here, the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea can’t be used again.”

“However, the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ is an additional spell that the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ never had, right? If this huge square pyramidal room is the core of the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’, the core of the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ should be somewhere else.”

Basically, it was time for the right hand to appear. Kamijou slowly let his vision fall on his fist. His job wasn’t to think of any questions related to magic.

“Alright, whether it’s the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ or the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’, there’s no problem once we destroy them. Since this place can’t be replaced, let’s start here.”

After he finished saying, Kamijou turned to Agnese and Orsola.

“First, let’s destroy this ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’. The ship will sink…or rather, the ice will turn back into seawater. After that, we’ll ask our Amakusa friends to bring us aboard.”

“Um…the Amakusa’s here as well…”

Agnese slightly coiled back.

Orsola glanced at her, and continued,

“However, the biggest problem will be after we alight the boat. I can’t direct everyone back. You have to think about what to do next—”

Orsola didn’t manage to finish.

Agnese suddenly kneeled down.

“Agnese?”

Kamijou frantically reached his hand out as he wanted to carry her, but her body seemed to dodge Kamijou’s hand as she lay prone on the floor. The Lotus Wand in her hand let out a ‘clank’.

“Gah…”

Agnese, who was lying on the floor, curled her limbs up like a baby.

“…Ih…gih…
GAAA

“The ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’…don’t tell me…HE DID SOMETHING TO AGNESE WITH THAT SPIRITUAL ITEM!!”

Were the preparations for the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’ complete? But if so, why had he let Agnese move about, and not executed the plan? Without any magical knowledge, Kamijou couldn’t tell. But from this situation, it was more likely that the preparations were complete.

But Biagio laughed.

With excitement and anxiety, he let out a fiery breath as he declared,

“Ha, the ‘Rosary of the Appointed Time’? It wasn’t adjusted, so I can only use the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’.”

He used an uncomfortable look to glare at Kamijou,

“If ‘power’ is needed, I have it here. Have you ever thought about it before? The Roman Catholics feared that the cannons would be pointed back at them if this was be taken, so they put in lots of efforts to create limits on the targeting and the ‘Queen’s Fleet’. If it really falls in the hands on the enemy, what do you think they’ll do as a last resort?”

Self-destruction.

The Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church was basically happily saying that he was to be swallowed up in this as well.

“BIAGIOOOO!!”

Kamijou couldn’t help but shout out.

It didn’t matter what the specific reasons were.

The main point was that since his plan failed, he was going to bring everyone down along with him.

Also, that would burn Agnese’s heart or turn her into a cripple.

“!!”

The surrounding lights started to shut off one by one, as if right before a film shown at a cinema. The square pyramidal room seemed to lose all the light, and one could hear the sounds of things chattering. The source of this noise came from above Kamijou, the equilateral triangles blocks that formed the wall were slowly moving out.

A ray of light descended down from the far ceiling of the square pyramidal room.

The light touched the numerous triangular pillars that emerged, and after reflection, inflection, diffusion, and reforming, it created a large patterned path in the air.

The light didn't form a flat surface, but a dome-shaped canopy.

It was like a planetarium—a starry night shine that one person created for his own benefit.

"…Don't ever think that you can escape."

Biagio stared at the ceiling and mocked,

"This is a magical tool that is enhanced by alchemy and has a fleet of 250 sinners. Destroying those walls or floors isn't going to stop it so easily!!"

As if in response to his voice, the distorted canopy increased in brightness.

As if it was coldly showing people this tool's standby mode.

Orsola frowned,

"This is bad…if this attack spell that can destroy an entire country is used…just ignoring purely on the explosiveness of the magic effects alone, the range shouldn't be less than 10km in radius."

10km.

Orsola's words filled something that couldn't be imagined.

"…I don't know where this is, strictly speaking, which part of the Adriatic Sea

this is. If it was north of Chioggia like just now, this should be near Venezia… everything would be engulfed. Besides that, the surrounding cities of Adria and Padova are in danger as well…”

“Not only that.”

It was unknown what would happen if there was a magical explosion.

But assuming that this was a tactical nuke that could incinerate anything that was within 10km radius.

If so, the affected areas wouldn’t simply just be in the explosion. A large amount of seawater would become steam, and the high temperatures would destroy everything within the place. The several hundred degrees of steam, when carried around for numerous kilometers, could easily cook people alive. After that, the steam would cause the temperatures to increase drastically, causing changes in air pressures. Simply put, gigantic hurricanes would form. The hurricanes would engulf all buildings and deliver the final blow to streets that had been cooked by the steam.

This was a double, no, triple-chained destruction.

What ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’? Kamijou cursed. Couldn’t you guys have destroyed Venezia like this without having to use this thing?

“Ah, AAHH…!!”

Agnese’s scream echoed throughout.

She looked a lot worse. Maybe it was because she was under the cold light similar to the starry night.

Kamijou used his right hand to stroke Agnese’s back while she was struggling in pain, but it didn’t seem to completely alleviate the effect. Seemed like if he didn’t destroy the Cross that Biagio was holding onto, it wouldn’t be interrupted.

CRACK!!

The noise didn’t come from Agnese, but rather, from the entire ship.

Biagio’s selfish request seemed to cause a huge burden to the ship. Once the burden reached the limit, everything may explode together with the ‘Queen’s Fleet’.

“Orsola, get Agnese away from here and to the deck! Isn’t there a ship or something? Get our Amakusa friends to hide there! If possible, get the Roman Catholics as well!!”

“Oh, okay. Then what about you?”

Even if she was a bit rickety, Orsola carried Agnese’s body with both hands. Ever so careful, she even carried the Lotus Wand.

Kamijou turned his eyes from Orsola to Biagio.

“I’ll just have to stop that guy. I’ll meet up with you guys later. Hurry up and go, Orsola!!”

“But…!?”

Orsola inadvertently let out a cry, but Agnese’s groan overlapped her voice. Besides, Biagio was slowly moving his fingers to the Cross on his neck.

There was no time.

“Definitely…you definitely have to meet up with us later!”

Maybe because she felt that she couldn’t do anything useful in this situation, and she couldn’t do any emergency procedures to Agnese, Orsola ran out of the room after saying this.

Only Kamijou and Biagio were left inside the huge pyramidal room.

Inside the cracking ship, the Bishop said,

“…This is why I hate this.”

With those bloodshot eyes, he got up from the kneeling position. That chest injury that had just been inflicted shouldn’t have recovered, but even so, with that distorted strength of his, Biagio used his hands and feet to support himself.

Seeing this starry phenomenon that he created himself, he said,

“Damn it, that bastard…what leave a mark in Roman Catholic history? That’s why I said that it was too early when I heard of the plan. I’m wrecked; I can only be destroyed as a sinner. The ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’ is the pride of the Roman Catholic Church, one of the ‘Ten Holy Artifacts’ that includes the ‘Apostle’s Cross’…I have no chance of making a comeback now that I lost it.”

“So you’re going to drag everyone else into your grave? What can you change? There’s no benefit to what you’re doing in the end, it’s just for your own consolation!!”

And because of this little consolation, he was going to drag everyone down along with him.

The nuns of the Agnese Forces that were ordered by Biagio to fight, the Amakusa teenagers who were trying not to kill them as they tried to stop this, Lucia and Angelene, Orsola and Agnese, Tatemiya and Index, everything.

Because of this order that came from under the artificial canopy.

Even if they want to use this huge flagship to destroy all these.

“What are…you saying?”

Biagio Busoni smirked.

That was a sad smile.

“To fight with so many people, and sink such a large fleet, and to bury Bishop Biagio Busoni. In this situation, nobody will feel endangered…this single group of fighters and the members, they’re confirmed to be a threat to the Roman Catholic Church. Anyone would agree with me. This is the last flower I’m going to give in my life journey. To remove these enemies, it’s alright even if I destroy the coast of the Adriatic Sea, right!?”

This was completely different from what Kamijou Touma thought.

Not to move forward, but to see the past and do his best.

Not to gain satisfaction by protecting others, but to gain satisfaction by robbing others.

Not only to get injured himself, but to deal this harm to others.

“Biagio…”

Kamijou silently gripped his right fist tightly.

The Bishop didn’t care, opening his arms wide as he said,

“…That’s the look. This look that doesn’t yield to threats is the greatest threat to us. Thus, I’ll completely destroy you here. THIS WILL BE MY LAST CONTRIBUTION TO THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH!!!”

“BIAGIOOOOOO—!!”

Kamijou roared as he dashed at Biagio with full force.

Biagio didn’t back away, but placed his hands on the Crosses on his neck. It looked like he was going to pray, but there was no Holy feeling to it. There was just a stubbornness that felt like it was as sticky as a marsh.

Kamijou leapt into Biagio’s arms, slamming a fist into his flank.

“—THE CROSS REVEALS THE REJECTION TO EVIL!!”

The Cross in the Bishop’s hand expanded as if it was exploding. Instantly, the metal block that was larger than a coffin became a shield, preventing Kamijou’s fist from moving.

Because of the power of the right hand, the Cross-shaped shield got blown away like sand.

Biagio, who was behind the Cross, pulled off another five Crosses and released them above Kamijou’s head.

“—THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS CORRECTS THE HAUGHTY!!”

The little decorations that were accelerated by heavy gravity shot down like cannons. But Kamijou didn’t bother to look at them.

“WOOOOHHH!!”

He took another step forward.

He had already gotten in front of Biagio. This extremely close distance, however, was a safety zone.

Kamijou released a punch.

He exerted all his strength into his fist, only aiming at the face.

“!?”

Biagio blocked his face with both hands. He could feel hard bones colliding with each other, but the damages reflected from within the enemy.

This wasn’t an instant defensive movement.

Biagio still had a ‘shield’ formed by a giant Cross.

If so,

“—THE CROSS REVEALS THE REJECTION TO EVIL!!”

The Bishop crossed his hands, each holding a single Cross.

The Crosses expanded right before Kamijou’s eyes.

BOOM!!

Like a counterattack, the metal-frame-sized Crosses each stabbed into Kamijou’s right shoulder and abdomen respectively. Kamijou didn’t even have time to bite his teeth as he was sent flying back. His body bounced on the ice floor twice, thrice before rolling a few more rounds.

“Ugh…ooo.”

His breathing became irregular, and just one second later, he was already sweating. Before he could feel the pain, he felt like vomiting. Even if he stood up, his body feels like he was standing upside-down.

Even so, Kamijou continued to stand up.

The pain in his right shoulder could spread through his entire arm with just a single touch.

On seeing this, Biagio grinned. His expression and feelings couldn't be directly related at all. The ominous smile made the opponent understand that.

"Impressive, you can actually stand up…you definitely got hit such that there was even a visceral impact…"

Biagio was unharmed as he gently stroked the tip of his nose that was hit.

"How can you still struggle? This simple thing like Sister Agnese, is it really such a meaningful reward!? That Sister will definitely die! HOW CAN SHE BE AN ENEMY AGAINST A HUGE ORGANISATION THAT HAS 2 BILLION FOLLOWERS AND ENCOMPASSES 131 COUNTRIES…NO ONE WILL ACCEPT THAT WOMAN!! WHY DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, YOU PAGAN MONKEY!!"

"…Who wants to know about that?"

Kamijou clenched his teeth as he said this.

In order to protect Lucia and Angelene, Agnese specially gave up her chance to be saved. Though he didn't know the specifics, she had protected Orsola from Biagio's clutches, using the Lotus Wand to shield Orsola. She really tried her best to resist.

What 2 billion followers, what 131 countries, what large organization; Kamijou didn't even care about these minor details at all.

Kamijou would definitely not allow this, because that guy had basically ignored the intentions of the Roman Catholic Church by doing a desperation suicide attack, causing Agnese's heart to shatter, and even engulfing everyone on the 'Queen's Fleet' in the explosion. He wouldn't allow this worst result to happen.

Biagio Busoni's words didn't even measure up to a whit.

If there was anyone who would give up on hearing these words, there wouldn't

be anyone coming here in the first place.

“Damn it, who would accept…!!”

Thus, he only said this.

A meaningless argument didn’t start: Kamijou and Biagio weren’t in the mood to let the conversation continue. With Kamijou’s unilateral words, the conversation was over.

Kamijou Touma ignored the pain on his shoulder as he spit onto the floor, clenching his right fist.

Biagio Busoni placed his hand on the countless Crosses hanging on his neck.

The first breath became the signal to start.

Both of them immediately dashed towards each other.

“WOOOHHH!!”

Within 3 seconds, the fist was already within attack range.

Biagio pulled down a Cross from in front of his chest.

“—THE CROSS REVEALS THE REJECTION TO EVIL!!”

He used a hand to block Kamijou from the front.

Furthermore, he used the other empty hand to stroke another Cross.

Even if he could knock aside the first hit he saw, Kamijou was unable to block Biagio’s consecutive attacks. With one attack after another, the power of the Cross was definitely greater than Kamijou’s fist. If he took attacks consecutively, he would definitely fall.

(I can’t decrease the distance the normal way.)

In this extremely close space, Kamijou was conscious that he was clenching his fist.

(I can't just have one hit, I need to stop this guy's attack pattern…!!)

Even if he thought this way, he couldn't make it even if he prepared for it.

In the end, Kamijou could only bet on this fist.

The palm blocking him was holding onto a Cross, and it started to expand.

"BIAGIOOO—!!"

Kamijou attacked the decoration in accordance to his roar.

Not with his right fist, but with his left.

To come up with a left hand strike that he was not used to, even an amateur could tell that the power was a lot weaker. Compared to the right fist that Kamijou normally used, the speed was a lot slower.

However, the left fist had something that the right hand didn't.

It didn't have the power of the Imagine Breaker.

"!!"

The Cross that Biagio was holding onto was knocked away by Kamijou's left fist. With a little sound, the decoration that the Bishop was holding onto changed direction slightly in mid-air.

However,

The Cross seemed to expand in a way that Biagio didn't expect, expanding like it was exploding.

BOOM!!

The tip of the Cross that Biagio was holding onto slammed into his jaw from below.

"GYAHH, AH!?"

Biagio's body jerked upwards.

(This…bastard—actually used my own attack…!!)

Even as he was thinking this, he was unable to make a sound. A blunt pain filled his mouth.

During this time, Kamijou took another step forward.

“WO—”

Right into the deepest part of the enemy.

This time, he exerted all his strength into the right fist that he always used as a weapon.

“—
OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!”

With this roar, he released all his power in this one fist.

CLANK!! The sound of metal breaking could be heard.

He was not aiming at Biagio’s face, but below—right in the middle of his chest.

As Biagio’s body was moving upwards, Kamijou let out another punch that nearly seemed to pierce through the Bishop’s chest.

His fist hit the four necklaces on Biagio's chest and the large number of Crosses on the necklaces, as if he was about to pierce through Biagio’s chest. All at once the four necklaces snapped and landed on the floor, and the numerous decorations scattered about with the sound of a crystal ball breaking.

The Bishop lost all his strength as he finally fell.

Seeing Biagio roll on the ice floor, Kamijou adjusted his breathing and said,

“Of course, I want to fight…”

He continued,

“…No matter whether you guys have 2 billion followers, or 131 countries, if you

still dare to do anything to Agnese and her group, I'll deal with all of you no matter how many times."

He looked up at the roof.

In this vision far away, the starry phenomenon that was supported by countless number of triangular pillars swayed about before vanishing. Like a home electric appliance that was cut off, only the ice construct was left.

The cracking sound echoed throughout this room that had lost all forms of light.

The 'Queen's Fleet' was gradually breaking.

It was because the core Cross was destroyed.

Just as Kamijou was confirming that he had prevented a destruction that would have engulfed everything.

The triangular room crumbled, the flagship split, and the boy again fell into the Adriatic Sea.

Epilogue: Return to Academy City.
L'inizio_Nuovo…….

Part 1

An Italian hospital sure feels refreshing.

There're a lot of people who go on overseas trips, but it's rare for a visitor to be sent to hospital because of an accident, right? Kamijou thought. Right now, he was lying on a stretcher, moving about in the darkness as creaking sounds could be heard. The doctor and nurse seemed to be saying something to him, but he didn't understand it at all. His right shoulder and left hand were bandaged, and there was an 'I'm OK!' bandage on his face…maybe because he had gotten disinfectant sprayed on his face, his eyes stung.

"Should be the disinfectant, I can't think of anything else! Damn it, why can others use the Amakusa's bathing technique and let their skin be so silky and smooth…"

"The Adriatic Sea really isn't that cold."

"WHY DO YOU LOOK SO HAPPY, INDEX!? WE BOTH SUNK TOGETHER WITH THE SHIP DOWN INTO THE VENETIAN COAST!! OI, YOU'RE HAPPY THAT YOU DIDN'T GET ABANDONED THIS TIME, ARE YOU—"

"!!"

Before Kamijou could finish speaking, Index suddenly tripped and fell onto the corridor.

"Since…since when am I happy!!?"

“I got it, you’re alright, right!? Really, you actually made them worried because of something like this, Index. Aren’t you giving Miss Nurse even more trouble? AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!”

Just as Kamijou was trying to accost the blond nurse, Index chomped on him.

“Touma’s still Touma even if he’s on a stretcher, right!?”

“I DON’T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU MEAN!!”

The nun who had leaped on the stretcher and executed an act of violence was pulled away. Maybe the nurse onee-chan didn’t understand what they were saying as she tilted her head as if to show that she didn’t understand.

“Yes, what? To…Touma, the doctor told you to pick up the phone.”

Hearing Index say this, Kamijou turned to look at the doctor, wondering why the doctor had a wireless phone in his hand. *Is it really alright to use a phone in a hospital?* Kamijou thought, but on further pondering, there should be phones in the hospital as well.

Anyway, he picked up the phone.

The phone seemed to be linked, as on picking it up, Kamijou heard a familiar voice.

“Do you have to end up like this even when you’re on a holiday trip?”

It was the frog-faced doctor.

Kamijou was always taken care of by this doctor in Academy City. To Kamijou, who often got injured and admitted into the hospital, he felt that this frog-faced doctor was really skilled with his hands.

“Eh, what’s with this suddenly? Ha, don’t tell me you can even diagnose a patient through the phone.”

“If I could, the hospital should start providing handphone service, right? However, because I can’t do that, I’m requesting you to do one thing. You are to immediately come back to Academy City.”

……WHAT?

“I’m not joking. Even if that facility is an ally of Academy City, it’s not good to let other hospitals check or adjust an esper’s body, right?”

“That’s…true. NO, HOWEVER…I MEAN! I CAN’T TAKE THE PLANE IN THIS CONDITION; IT TAKES ABOUT 10 HOURS FOR A PLANE FLIGHT!? BEFORE THAT, I’M COVERED WITH WOUNDS, YOU KNOW!?”

“Ah, don’t worry about that. There should be a supersonic jet parked at the Marco Polo Airport. That can go past 7,000km per hour, so you should reach Japan in an hour, no?”

“A LARGE JET!? ISN’T THAT THE FANTASY NORTH AMERICAN X-15 RESEARCH PLANE!? CAN I REALLY RIDE ON THIS PLANE THAT’S FASTER THAN A BULLET WHEN I DON’T HAVE ANY TRAINING!?”

“No problem, no problem. I rode on it before. The most it feels is like there’s no gravity.”

“THAT THING ONLY NEEDS AN HOUR!? I GUESS ALL THE CONTENTS IN MY STOMACH WILL GO THE WRONG WAY!!”

“No problem, no problem. I rode on it before. Within the first ten minutes, you don’t even have time to think about that.”

WHO SAYS THERE’S NO PROBLEM!! Kamijou hugged his head with full force.

“WAIT A SECOND! I…I BASICALLY HAVEN’T EVEN BEEN IN ITALY FOR ONE DAY? AND I DRANK THE WATER OF THE ADRIATIC SEA TWICE… NO, INCLUDING THE ESCAPE, THAT’S THREE TIMES. I DIDN’T GET INTO THE IMPORTANT VENEZIA ONCE!!”

“Oh my, aren’t you happy with this kind of experience. Anyway, I have one thing to say…I know this is unreasonable, but just give up and come back.”

YOUR TONE IS SO COLD AND UNREASONABLE!! Kamijou again hugged his

head.

At this moment, the voice on the other side of the phone continued,

“Oh yes, that cute girl that’s been coming to the hospital to visit knew I was about to call you, so she said that she has some important words for me to pass to you.”

“WHAT???”

Kamijou wondered, who was this cute girl? Right now, Shirai Kuroko and Himegami Aisa were staying in the hospital. For Himegami, there was Fukiyose Seiri and Komoe-sensei. On Shirai’s side, there was Misaka Mikoto—

“Wait a second. Misaka Mikoto?”

Mn, the frog-faced doctor on the other side of the phone carelessly nodded his head.

“That’s right. Seems like she said 'After you come back, expect me to give you that punishment game from Daihaseisai'?”

“WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!? I COMPLETELY FORGOT ABOUT IT!! AAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHH!!”

The doctor and nurses forced down Kamijou Touma, who was starting to act violent on the stretcher. They seemed to mistake this as some emergency situation.

Kamijou Touma and Misaka Mikoto had made a bet during Daihaseisai, and Kamijou, who lost the punishment game, had to listen to whatever Mikoto said. If she knew that he forgot about this and went on a tour to Italy…

“WHAT’S WAITING FOR ME IS HELL!! NOW I DON’T WANT TO GO BACK!! ARGHH…WAAIITT!! DON’T USE THAT SPECIALIZED TOOL TO HOLD ME DOWN!!”

The stretcher was being carried away.

The person on the other side of the phone said to the sighing Kamijou,

“Alright, then…what should I say? Welcome home, Kamijou Touma.”

Part 2

It was midnight now, the time when the date changes.

The dormitory of the Anglican Church was located in a corner of Lambeth. The people who were living here weren’t penniless people, but people who did not want to involve ordinary citizens because of something unexpected. If the surrounding people were all experts, even if there was a battle, they could reduce the damage to the minimum.

“I see. It’s been hard on you.”

The one who was saying this in the middle of a dormitory room was Kanzaki Kaori. An Asian face with waist-length black hair tied in a ponytail, she was wearing a short-sleeved T-shirt that had a knot tied at the bottom, and a pair of jeans that had one side cut above the thigh. The more than 2m long ‘Seven Swords Seven Heavens’ that she normally hung on her waist was now leaning on the wall.

She was not talking to someone, but a phone.

It was an old-fashioned rotary dial phone. The red ornament had a gold lacing on it, a rather nice looking antique. On a side note, she was talking to her colleague, Tsuchimikado Motoharu.

“Nya, so, if you want to know the report, you can go ask the Amakusa people. As for me, I’m in more danger when I search for this information, you know? You don’t know about that.”

“I…I’m not a member of the Amakusa. It feels arrogant if I’m to act familiar enough to talk to them.”

Kanzaki used her thumb to play with the phone line and said.

After that, she said,

“Aren’t you going to collect information from the Veneto region? Isn’t this too coincidental? The Amakusa went to Chioggia to help with the moving, and that boy and Index went to Italy…according to the report, the Roman Catholics mistook that Orsola Aquinas was sent there to stop the ‘Queen of the Adriatic Sea’, is that true? I thought that the Roman Catholics’ view was correct.”

Kanzaki‘s bare feet knocked on the floor as she spoke.

Though the interior design of the room was Western, Kanzaki was forbidden from wearing slippers inside. Maybe it was more of a foreign culture trade-off.

“Hmh, regarding that, I can’t say it because of a lot of reassooonnnss—”

“Wha…what?”

Tsuchimikado purposely dragged his voice, making Kanzaki even more wary.

Her prediction was correct.

“…O…Nee…-chin, you gave Kami-yan quite a lot of problems this time, nya —?”

“Eh!?”

However, the impact far exceeded Kanzaki Kaori’s limits.

“What should you do? Onee-chin, this isn’t something that can be solved by just wearing a maid costume and serving him for an entire day. Ah, if so, how about that? I’ll lend my female angel costume with an Angelic halo and white wings to you! This is truly a maid costume; use that to decide the winner, Nee-chin!! WOO…OOOHOHO!! What angel? If this cute fallen angel appears, I don’t know how Kami-yan will react!”

“FOR…FOR HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO TALK ABOUT IT!?… BESIDES, WHY DO YOU HAVE SUCH A THING!?”

“Ah, that’s not it. Actually, I bought that for Maika. That sister actually said ‘maids can’t cosplay’, and even punched me in the cheekbone…no, for a girl’s actions, isn’t that like a real military-trained punch nya?”

“…Isn’t your sister reaching puberty? You should worry about that.”

Being weak all over, Kanzaki suddenly realized something.

This wasn’t the main point.

“Wait a second. Did the Anglican Church and the higher ups of Academy City use many ways to get Kamijou Touma involved? What has that got to do with me!?”

“Eh? Then Nee-chin, don’t you have any thanks for Kami-yan!?”

“Uuuu!?”

“Ah—ah—Kamijou managed to save the Amakusa members from the ‘Queen’s Fleet’ with much difficulty, and not only did you not thank him, you even declared that you have nothing to do with it. You’ve really fallen, Kanzaki Kaori. Kami-yan will be disappointed if he hears this. But that guy’s really gentle, so maybe he won’t be angry.”

“Where…where have I…your words make sense, but what am I supposed to do!? Don’t I owe him even more favors now!!?”

“That’s why you should honestly act as a fallen angel!! If you’re one of the no-more-than-twenty Saints, then realize it, Nee-chin!!...Eh? Onee-chin, are you listening? Wait, I’m not done—!!”

The speaker got slammed hard.

Kanzaki stared blankly at the phone for a while, her face all green.

“…Fall…fallen Angel maid costume…?”

Kanzaki stared at her trembling hands, and then stared at the cuboid fish tank that had a tropical fish and was beside the phone. The former Supreme Pontiff looked completely puzzled.

She brought her face near the fish tank, and in response, the fish moved near with a ‘What now, are you giving me food to eat?’ look. She used both hands to grab a small painted plate that was besides the fish tank, and placed it on her head.

“A…a halo, does it look like this? But…but a fallen angel…how does it move or talk…it’s like the Devil. In this situation, it should be female. If the other person’s a male, maybe I have to act like some little Devil—”

If these words were heard by the Archangel ‘The Power of God’ that had briefly appeared as Misha Kreutzev, she would definitely be attacked on the spot. But since Kanzaki was in the midst of this mess, she didn’t notice this at all.

This one of only twenty Saints instantly turned silent before tilting her head.

“—Just…just like this—Touma.”

The doorbell suddenly rang.

“…???”

A surprised Kanzaki frantically pulled the painted plate from above her head. The little tropical fish saw her like this and immediately escaped into the deepest part of the tank at high speed. Kanzaki quickly looked around, and after confirming that no one was around, she placed a hand on her chest and heaved a sigh of relief. After that, she looked at the door.

Besides the various rooms in the dormitory, there was an electric bell at the entrance for visitors to use. What did this ring mean? Maybe there was a delivery service here.

Kanzaki grabbed the sword leaning on the wall, put on her boots outside the room, and passed through the long wooden corridor before arriving at the entrance.

Though there was a manager here, she was often asleep. Kanzaki walked toward the door, and inside that management room, the woman was still sleeping. Looking at how the television was still on, it seemed that she had watched till she fell asleep. The television was meant to prevent people from sleeping, but without a favorite show, it would have the opposite effect.

Kanzaki couldn’t do anything else but open the door.

The one standing at the entrance was Orsola Aquinas.

“I…I’m back.”

“Ah, welcome back, Orsola.”

Kanzaki looked surprised as she welcomed her neighbor in the dormitory.

The people living here normally didn’t need to press the doorbell, but Orsola was holding many things with both hands, so she couldn’t use her key to open the door. Besides, she was holding two travelling bags, and there was even a hiking backpack, and there were sports bags that were strapped around like a kimono. This huge amount of heavy equipment made her look like she was going hiking.

“Orsola, wasn’t your luggage sent here beforehand?”

“Eh hehe. I got some new luggage halfway though.”

“???”

In front of a surprised Kanzaki, Orsola smiled as she stepped aside as if she was letting people pass.

Eh? Kanzaki’s eyebrows twitched.

The petite nun grabbed Orsola’s nun's habit as she stood, looking like she was hiding behind Orsola.

Her name was Agnese Sanctis.

“There’ll be a lot more people coming over. This dormitory will be a lot noisier.”

In front of Kanzaki, who hadn’t understood what was going on, Orsola said this sentence akin to a bomb.

Part 3

It was the St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City.

Inside the largest church of the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, crude footsteps ripped the silence in the air apart.

"Cheh, in the end, that idiot Busoni failed. Even the core of the 'Queen of the Adriatic Sea' was destroyed, and it won't appear again…really, to think of this 'Appointed Time of the Rosary', create that spell, and refined till it can be used, who does he have to thank for all that? I can't forgive this. What's more unforgivable is that he actually disappeared! Who's hiding him? Who am I supposed to exert my pressure on!!"

In this sanctuary that was engulfed in darkness, a man and a woman were walking about.

As the moonlight that shot past the glass was too weak, it was hard to see the details of those two figures.

One of them was bent like an elderly man.

The other seemed like a young lady, with a rather exquisite body.

"…But even if it's you, you're too anxious. Even though it's expected that the Anglican Church would get involved, there were obstacles all over the place even if that wasn't the case…to be honest, even if no one could intervene, that Biagio Busoni wouldn't succeed. It was a big mistake to expect that guy to deal with the flaws."

"Do you know who you're talking to? What I said is needed to be done will be done. That's the law of the world. So stupid, don't you understand even now?"

"Do you know who you're talking to?"

The old man suddenly became a lot more pressuring.

The current atmosphere was already dominated by the old man. This was a situation where one person must reign supreme; not to lower his head, but to force the other person to lower her head even if she hated it. The person hearing this must have felt like she was being grabbed by an invisible hand and forcefully pulled down. It was that kind of pressure.

However, the female figure didn’t change.

“The Pope, so what?”

The female figure replied in a casual tone.

Such a frivolous tone easily shattered the situation of the old man dominating.

“…”

The old man called the Pope was obviously silent.

But the female didn’t care.

“Don’t be like this. You should know who the Roman Catholic Church is really under. Even if you disappear, another Pope will just take that seat. But if I disappear, no one can replace me. Can’t you understand that? Do you want to try?”

“Nonsense.”

The old man seemed uninterested as he interrupted the woman.

“The only person whom God personally handed the later path of Christianity is St. Peter. After that, the Popes were extremely active, but their main function is to manage the heritage. I was chosen by the crowd, and not from God. I understand that, so don’t say it. It’s painfully obvious, yet I had to say it again. I’m really angry.”

“But didn’t you want it? Not by the number of votes, but the one and only evidence of being chosen by God. And to revive the Roman Catholic Church, you’re not relying on the majority, but like past Christianity, using only the teachings and will to decide the path.”

“…I’ve already told you not to repeat it again.”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry. But in my eyes, you really can’t make it. You’re still qualified, so you couldn’t achieve it. Speaking of which, the Pope was chosen by an election. To be chosen can be considered an honor. But you’re not satisfied. The reason is simple: while the Son of God and his disciples were preaching,

Christianity was a minor sect among the many ideas. Even though it was a minor sect, their power could win most people. Thus, you feel that getting the majority of the votes has no Holy value. What you believe in is like me, being unrestricted by voting, yet you kept getting only votes…is that troublesome? Or is being bothered by this luxury?"

"!!"

The old man quickly turned his head about.

Pacha, an inexplicable breaking sound could be heard.

Regarding this inexplicable scenario, the female figure didn't move. However, the tension and margin between these two's attitudes had already shown an incomprehensible offensive and defensive result.

"Not a bad malicious intent."

The woman laughed.

"But if you're going to show some malice to me, you'll die, you know?"

After saying that, the female showed her tongue.

The sound of metal colliding could be heard.

There was a tongue ring in her tongue, and attached to the tongue ring was a little chain that was used for a necklace. The chain extended down past her waist, and there was a little Cross attached to it.

"…"

The man and the woman maintained a foot's distance between them.

Unhappily, and with a little hint of envy, the man muttered,

"—**God's Right Seat**. To you, the Pope isn't really anything, right?"

"Just knowing that I belong to that 'group' shows that you're still a high-ranking person. Aren't you satisfied with that?"

The woman seemed like she had been attacked by something, but she looked like she didn’t care.

She laughed and said,

“After seeing this, give me a signature.”

“You’re ordering me?...Wait, this document is…”

“You would prepare this information one day, maybe two to three years later. I just shortened the time. Though it’s troublesome, your signature is really powerful. Hurry up and finish it before the sun rises. It’ll be over once you write your own name.”

“But…”

The old man looked hesitant.

“…I still can’t agree with it. Forget about it if he has a really deep link with magic, but that person only doesn’t know the existence of God. Though it’s a sin to have a pagan belief, if he doesn’t know, there’s a way to save him. Regarding this, if you’re going to do it like this, I can only say that I disagree with it…”

“I don’t have a denying style.”

The female figure asserted herself.

“Passiveness, imperativeness, teamwork, solo, past, future, finishing, assumption, what’s after that? I don’t care what it is, I just can’t agree with denying it. I said I want to do this, and I will. No matter whether it’s St. Peter or the Son of God, this rule won’t change. So you’re going to sign this document, got it?”

The old man held the document and gently nodded his head.

One could see him reveal a somewhat bitter look.

“Very good.”

After saying that, the female figure disappeared in the darkness.

Had she really disappeared, or had she purposely acted like she disappeared? The old man didn't consider it. Even if he couldn't analyze what the other person used, there wasn't really a problem. No matter what, that woman was far ahead of him, even if he couldn't tell if she was above him.

He turned to stare at the document.

Inside the light-lit Cathedral, there was only a dim moonlight shooting in through the glass. The old man's eyes gazed at the words which weren't really visible in the darkness.

(…She's a bit too impatient. Is that her habit?)

Even though he thought of this, that woman had decided on this, so he would just leave it as it was. Like what she had declared, that woman didn't have a denying style.

The old man unhappily returned to his room.

There was no pen there.

The document read,

'Toma Kamijo.

Potrebbe investigare urgentemente? Quando lui è pericolso, lo uccida di sicuro.'

It meant 'Kamijou Touma. Quickly investigate the above named person. If he's confirmed to be an enemy of God, eliminate him'.

Even if the Roman Catholic Church wanted to mobilize, or even send out God's Right Seat, they had to prepare a document to allow an assassination.

The order would be carried out within 5 days.

Afterword

To the readers who collected each book in this series, it has been a while.

To the readers who bought all 11 books at one go, nice to meet you.

I'm Kamachi Kazuma.

Though I kept saying that I'm rather free, it's now the 11th book. This time, that...there's no change in season, and the penalty game has to be delayed. This time, it's a holiday trip. Not Kanzaki Kaori, but the other Amakusa members. Though it's a fleet battle, it's not a cannon war, but fireships. This really is a changeup that slightly differs from the norm.

As for the scenario, there should be a certain organization behind it. A petite girl and tall girl that appeared once have joined in as main characters this time. In a complete sense, there's a lot less new characters, but because of that, there's a lot more excitement to this story.

On the magic side, those are mainly based on two certain organizations. Others include the legend of the Cross, and a slight mention of the Twelve Apostles.

The so called fireships aren't fabricated, in reality, such a tactic existed. That was before the real torpedo was unveiled. The English Navy seemed like they really stuffed the large ships with gunpowder, and rushed in with the ships unmanned. Though that battle had to be won, it was truly a large scale.

To Haimura-sensei, who is in charge of illustrations, and Miki-sensei, who's in charge of printing, I'm sorry that I've been causing trouble to you two often. Because of the change in story, it probably took a long time to search for information. It's been hard on you two. And to Miss Yoshimi and Miss Fukushima Yuuko, who were supervising the Italian language, allow me to express my thanks.

At the same time, I would like to thank all the readers. I'm grateful that everyone

read on till the last page.

And now, this volume ends here.

I hope you'll continue to read the next volume.

At this moment, let me sign off first.

There'll definitely be a change of seasons and the penalty game next time!

-Kamachi Kazuma-

Notes

1. ↑ **Italian:** Venice
2. ↑ Grappa is a type of Italian alcohol, while Bassano is a city that makes Grappa.
3. ↑ These are all actual locations.
4. ↑ Size of a company
5. ↑ Bucentaur

Toaru Majutsu no Index — Volume 11

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